

Cosmopolitan



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COSMOPOLITAN

America's Greatest Magazine

This Month

Cover: "Music hath charms——"

Harrison Fisher

Making and Spending

Meredith Nicholson

The Need

Edgar A. Guest

Decoration by Pruett Carter

The Profiteers

E. Phillips Oppenheim

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

My Road to Faith

James Oliver Curwood

Illustrated with Photographs

Rings and Chains

Zoë Akins

Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard

The Wildcatter

William MacHarg

Illustrated by W. H. D. Koerner

Grand Larceny

Albert Payson Terhune

Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy

First Aid for Loony Biddle

P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrated by T. D. Skidmore

The Stage To-day

Photographs in Artgravure

A Rival to the Prince

Frank R. Adams

Illustrated by Charles D. Mitchell

Find the Woman

Arthur Somers Roche

Illustrated by Dean Cornwell

Boomerang Bill

Jack Boyle

Illustrated by Lee Conrey

Are You a Coward?

Woods Hutchinson

Photographic Decorations by A. P. Milne

Star-Dust

Fannie Hurst

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

Use Crystalsweet

Marion McCrea

Illustrated by H. R. Ballinger

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The Inspiration for a Great Novel

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TOWARD sunset of a California evening, Peter B. Kyne and I—no man ever had a better companion than Peter B. Kyne—drove up to one of those picturesque old missions in southern California. A hooded and sandaled padre welcomed us. We strolled into the churchyard just as the evening bells were tolling. We were studying the old Spanish names on the gravestones and musing on the California that was when we came upon one stone that startled us to attention.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
PATRICK O'REILLY
OF COUNTY CORK

The dates on the headstone went back two generations.

I turned to Peter.

"What under the sun do you suppose led Patrick O'Reilly, of County Cork, into this Spanish settlement?"

With that wonderful Irish smile of his, he answered:

"What leads an Irishman anywhere? 'Twas a pair of flashing black eyes, to be sure."

He and I have talked about the gravestone a number of times since; it fascinated both of us. Finally, early this spring, while we were after trout in the northern part of California, it gave Peter Kyne the inspiration for the best novel he has written.

It's a novel which has to do with the days of the old ranchos, the days of guitars in the moonlight, the days of beautiful Spanish women, and men gallant and brave. Also, it has to do very vitally with the California of today, and with a California question which is so far-reaching that it affects every man, woman, and child in the United States.

The novel begins in the next—the January—issue of COSMOPOLITAN.

I want every reader of COSMOPOLITAN to begin at the beginning, because, in the course of one of the most remarkably fine love-stories I ever read, I have learned more about one part of my own country than I could have from any other source.

RAY LONG.

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RAY LONG, Vice-President

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Cosmopolitan, 119 West 40th Street, New York

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COSMOPOLITAN

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Making and Spending

By Meredith Nicholson

TO spend all we earn is to prove ourselves improvident; to spend more than we earn is to invite disaster. The only sound rule is to preserve a safe margin between a prosperous to-day and an uncertain to-morrow.

There is constant and wide-spread complaint of the extravagance of the American people. Far too many of us think it a shameful thing to be thought economical and thrifty. The keeping-up of appearances is a practise of direst folly. Better to be thought "close" and have a savings-account than to be identified with the free spenders who are blind to the needs of to-morrow.

Much has been said and written about the conservation of the national wealth, but it is incumbent upon all of us to stop waste in our personal affairs. We must free ourselves of the fallacy that economy is a synonym for stinginess.

It is trite but right that a dollar saved is a dollar earned.

I have watched with interest the long line of depositors pressing toward the receiving window of a trust company on a Saturday night. These men, women, and children are establishing for themselves a shelter against the coming of the inevitable rainy day. We may fairly gage the good Americanism of a town from the total of its savings-accounts, the number of its life-insurance policy-holders, and the percentage of homes owned by its citizens.

*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!*

Such was the complaint of Wordsworth a hundred years ago, and it is frequently reiterated by critics of American life. The fine old simplicities of our fathers are in danger in these times of high pressure and high prices.

Get the saving habit! Scan your dollar carefully before you spend it. Every penny saved adds to your ease of mind and self-respect and contributes to the strength and security of America.





THE NEED

By Edgar A. Guest

Decoration by Pruett Carter

WE were sittin' there an' smokin' of our pipes, discussin' things,
Like lickin' votes for wimmin, an' the totterin' thrones o' kings.
When he ups an' strokes his whiskers with his hand an' sayst me:
'Changin' laws an' legislatures ain't, as fur as I can see,
Goin' to make this world much better, unless somehow we can
Find a way to make a better an' a finer sort o' man.

"The trouble ain't with statutes or with systems—not at all;
It's with humans jus' like we air an' their petty ways an' small.
We could stop our writin' law-books an' our regulatin' rules
If a better sort of manhood was the product of our schools.
For the things that we air needin' isn't writin' from a pen
Or bigger guns to shoot with, but a bigger type of men.

"I reckon all these problems air jest ornery like the weeds.
They grow in soil that oughta nourish only decent deeds,
An' they waste our time an' fret us when, if we were thinkin' straight
An' livin' right, they wouldn't be so terrible and great.
A good horse needs no snaffle, an' a good man, I opine,
Doesn't need a law to check him or to force him into line.

"If we ever start in teachin' to our children, year by year,
How to live with one another, there'll be less o' trouble here.
If we'd teach 'em how to neighbor an' to walk in honor's ways,
We could settle every problem which the mind o' man can raise.
What we're needin' isn't systems or some regulatin' plan,
But a bigger an' a finer an' a truer type o' man."

THE PROFITEERS

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

I

THE Marchioness of Amesbury was giving a garden-party in the spacious grounds of her mansion in Kensington.

Perhaps because it was the first affair of its sort of the season, and perhaps, also, because Cecilia Amesbury had the knack of making friends in every walk of life, it was remarkably well attended.

Two stock-brokers, Roger Kendrick and his friend Maurice White, who had escaped from the City a little earlier than usual, congratulated themselves upon having found a quiet and shady seat where iced drinks were procurable and the crush was not so great.

"Anything doing in your market to-day?" Kendrick asked his younger associate.

White made a little grimace.

"B. & I., B. & I., all the time," he grumbled. "I'm sick of the name. And, to tell you the truth, Ken, when a client asks for my advice about them, I don't know what to say."

Kendrick contemplated the tips of his patent-leather boots. He was a

good-looking, well-turned-out, and well-to-do representative of the occupation which he, his father, and grandfather had followed—ten years older, perhaps, than his companion, but remarkably well preserved. He had made money and kept it.

"They say there's big American capital at the back of them," he remarked.

"They may say what they like, but who's to prove it?" his young companion argued. "They must have enormous backing, of course, but, until they declare it, I'm not pushing the business. Look at the board on their merits, Ken."

Roger Kendrick nodded. Everyone on the Stock Exchange was interested in B. & I.'s, and he settled himself down comfortably to hear what his companion had to say on the matter.

"There's old Dreadnought Phipps," White continued; "Peter Phipps, to give him his right name. Well, has ever a man who aspires to be considered a financial giant had such a career? He was broken on the New York Exchange, went to Montreal and made a million or so, back to New York, where he got in with the copper lot, and no doubt made real money. Then he went for that wheat corner in Chicago. He got out of that with another fortune, though they say he sold his fellow directors. Now he turns up here, chairman of the B. & I., which must have bought fifty million pounds' worth of wheat already this year. Well, unless he's considerably out of his depth, he must have some one else's money to play with besides his own."

"Let me see; who are the other directors?" Kendrick inquired.

"Well, there's young Stanley Rees, Phipps' nephew, who came in for three hundred thousand pounds a few years ago," Maurice White answered; "old Skinfint Martin, who may be worth half a million, but certainly not more, and Dredlington. Dredlington's a rabbit, of course. He hasn't got a bob. There's money enough among the rest for any ordinary business undertaking, if only one could understand what the mischief they were up to. They can't corner wheat in this country."

"I wonder," Kendrick murmured. "The harvests last year were bad all over the world, you know, and this year, except in the States and Canada, they will be worse. With another fifty million, it might be done."

"But they're taking deliveries," White pointed out. "They have granaries all over the kingdom, and subsidiary companies to do the dirty work of refusing to sell. Already they say that three-quarters of the wheat of the country is in their hands, and, mind you, they sell nothing. The price goes up and up, just the same as the price of their shares has risen. They buy, but they never sell. Some of the big banks must be helping, of course, but I know one or two—one in particular—which decline to handle any business from them at all."

"I should say their greatest risk was government interference," Kendrick observed. "Gambling in foodstuffs ought to be forbidden."

"It would take our government a year to make up their minds what to do," White scoffed, "and, by that time, these fellows would have sold out and be on to something else."

"Well, it's too hot for shop," Kendrick yawned. "I think I shall cut work on Friday and have a long week-end at Sandwich."

"I have a good mind to do the same," his companion declared. "And as to B. & I.'s,

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It was only the surprised exclamation of the man who had entered which brought them back to a very sordid present

A new novel by E. Phillips Oppenheim, author of "The Great Impersonation," "The Inevitable Millionaires," etc.

there's money to be made out of them one way or the other; but I shall advise my clients not to touch them. Hullo! We're discovered. Here's Sarah."

The young lady in question, escorted by a pink-complexioned, somewhat bored-looking young man, who cheered up at the sight of the iced drinks, greeted the two friends with a smile. She was attired in the smartest of garden-party frocks; her brown eyes were clear and attractive; her complexion was freckled but pleasant, her mouth humorous—a suggestion which was further carried out by her slightly *retroussé* nose.

"You shall advise your clients not to touch what?" she inquired. "Are there any tips going?"

Kendrick shook his head.

"You stick to the tips your clients slip into your hand, my dear young lady," he advised, "and don't dabble in what you don't understand. The Stock Exchange is a den of thieves."

Miss Sarah Baldwin made a little grimace.

"My clients are such a mean lot," she complained. "Now that they have got over the novelty of being driven in a taxi-cab by a woman, they are positively stingy. What is it that you're going to advise your clients to leave alone, please, Mr. White?"

"British & Imperial Granaries."

The young man—the Honourable James Wilshaw—suddenly dropped his eye-glass and assumed an anxious expression.

"I say, what's wrong with them, White?" he demanded. "They're large holders of wheat, and wheat's going up all the time."

"Wheat's going up because they're buying," was the dry comment. "Directly they leave off, it will drop, and when it begins to drop, look out for a slump in B. & I.'s."

The young man relapsed into a seat by Sarah's side.

"But look here, Maurice, my boy: Why should they leave off buying, eh?" he inquired.

"Because," the other explained, "there is a little more wheat in the world than the B. & I. have money for."

"I can give you a further reason," Kendrick intervened, "for leaving B. & I.'s severely alone. There is, at the present moment, on his way to this country, if he is not already here, one of the shrewdest and finest speculators in the world, who is coming over on purpose to fight the B. & I. tooth and nail."

"Who's that, Ken?" Maurice White asked, with interest.

"Yes; his name?" Sarah demanded. "I love American millionaires who do things in Wall Street and fight with billions. If he's really nice, he may take me off your hands, Jimmy."

"I'd like to see him try," that young man growled, with unexpected fierceness.

"Well, his name is John Philip Wingate," Kendrick told them. "He started life, I believe, as a journalist. Then he inherited a fortune and made another one on Wall Street, where I imagine he came across Dreadnought Phipps. What happened I don't exactly know," he went on, "but, somehow or other, the two got at loggerheads. Wingate has sworn to break Phipps. There will be quite a commotion in the City when it gets about that Wingate is here or on his way over."

"It's almost like a romance,"

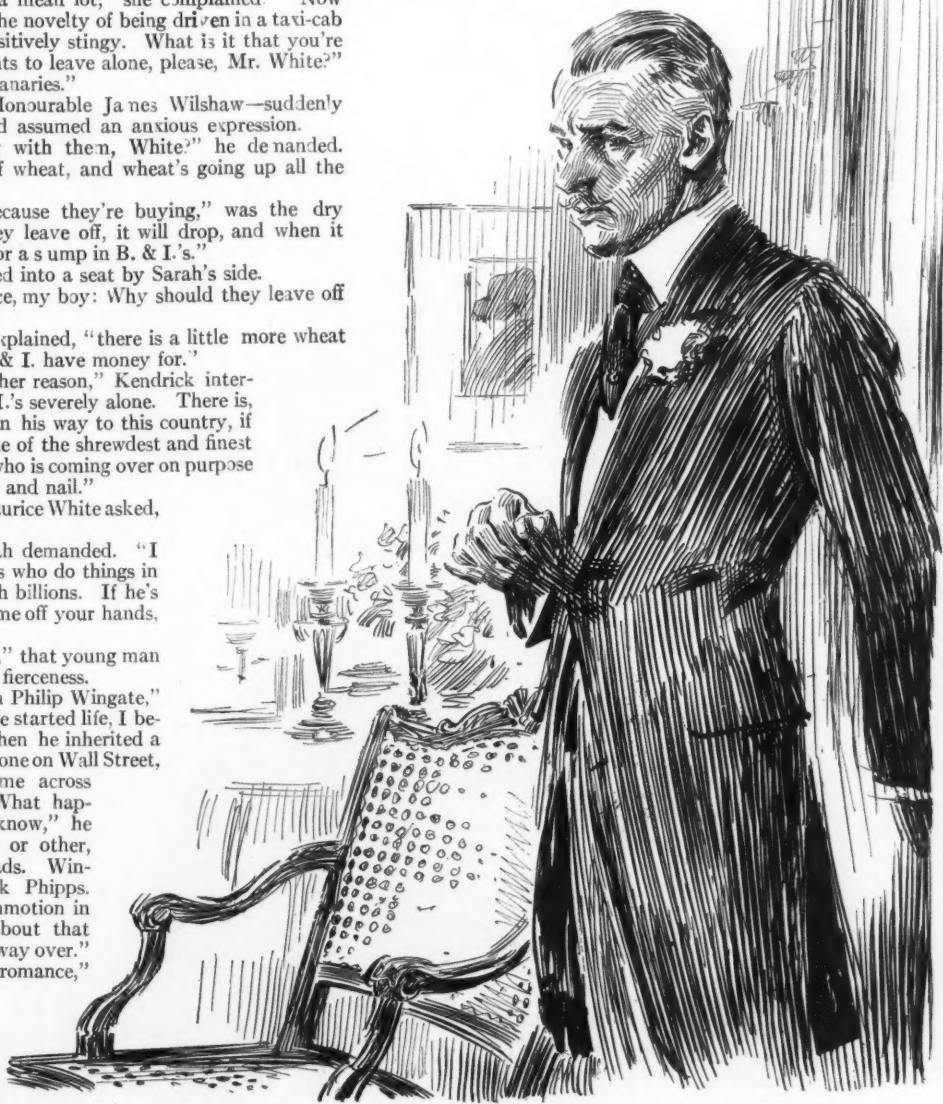
Sarah declared, as she took the ice which her cavalier had brought her. "Tell me more about Mr. Wingate, please."

"John Wingate," Kendrick said reflectively,

ly, "is a much younger man than Phipps—I shouldn't say that he was more than thirty-five—and much better-looking. I must say that, in a struggle, I shouldn't know which to back. Wingate has sentiment, and Phipps has none, conscience, of which Phipps hasn't a shred, and a sense of honor, with which Phipps was certainly never troubled. These points are all against him in a market duel, but, on the other hand, he has a bigger outlook than Phipps; he has nerves of steel and the grit of a hero. Did I tell you, by the bye, that he went into the war as a private and came out a brigadier?"

"Splendid!" Sarah murmured. "Now tell us where Peter Phipps comes in."

"Well," Kendrick continued, "Phipps attracts sympathy because of his lavish hospitality and apparent generosity, while Wingate is a man of many reserves, and has few friends,



"I fear," the newcomer remarked, "that I am an intruder. Perhaps, Josephine, I may be favored with an introduction to this gentleman."

either on this side or the other. Then Phipps, I should say, is the wealthier man, and, in this present deal, at any rate, he has marvelous support. Then, too, I think he understands the tricks of the market better over here, and he has a very dangerous confederate in Skinflint Martin. If he's put his own money into B. & I., I should say that Phipps can't be broken. My advice to Wingate will be to stand by for a time."

The sound of approaching voices warned them that their seclusion was on the point of being broken into. Their hostess, an elderly lady of great social gifts and immense volubility, appeared, having for her escort a tall, well-groomed man of youthful middle age, with the square jaw and humorous gleam in his gray eyes of the best American type. Lady Amesbury beamed upon them all.

"Just the people I was looking for!" she exclaimed. "I want you all to know my great friend, Mr. Wingate, from New York."

II

EVERYONE was glad to meet Wingate, and Kendrick and he exchanged the greetings of old friends.

"Now you have found some one whom you can talk to, my dear John," his hostess declared, "I shall consider you off my hands for the afternoon. Come and dine with me next Sunday night, and don't lose your heart to Sarah Baldwin. She's a capricious little minx, and, besides, she's engaged to Jimmy there, though heaven knows whether they'll ever get married—There! I knew it! My own particular bishop being lured into conversation with Hilda Sutton, who's just become a free thinker and can't talk of anything else. It will spoil the dear man's afternoon if she gets really started. Good-by, all of you. Take care of Mr. Wingate."

She hurried off, and the newcomer seated himself between Kendrick and Sarah.

"We've just been hearing all about you, Mr. Wingate," the latter began, "but I must say you're the last person we expected to see here. We imagined you dashing in a great motor-car from Liverpool to your office in the City, dictating letters, speaking into the telephone, and doing all sorts of violent things. I don't believe Mr. Kendrick told us the truth about you at all."

Wingate smiled good-humoredly.

"Tell me what Kendrick has been saying."

"Well, he has just given us a thrilling picture of you," she went on, "coming over here, armed cap-a-pie, to do battle for the romance of money. Already we were picturing to ourselves poor Drednought Phipps, the first of your victims, seeking for an asylum in the Stock Exchange almshouses, and the other desperado—what was his name—Skinflint Martin?—on his knees before you while you read him a moral lecture on the evils of speculation."

Wingate's eyes twinkled.

"From all of which, I judge that you have been discussing the British & Imperial Granaries," he remarked.

Kendrick nodded.

"Our dear young friend, Miss Baldwin," he said, "has a vivid imagination and a wonderful gift of picturesque similes. Still, I have just been telling them that one reason why I wouldn't touch B. & I.'s is

because they have an idea over here that you are going to have a shy at them."

"My attitude toward the company in question is certainly an unfriendly one," Wingate admitted. "I hate all speculations the basis of which is utterly selfish. Dealing in foodstuffs is one of them. But, Miss Baldwin," he went on, turning toward her, "why do we talk finance on such a wonderful afternoon? I really came over from the States to get an occasional cocktail, order some new clothes, and see some plays. What theaters do you advise me to go to?"

"I can tell you plenty," she answered, "which I should advise you to stay away from. It is quite easy to see, Mr. Wingate, that you have been away from London quite a long time. You are not in the least in touch with us. On the Stock Exchange they do little nowadays, I am told, but invent stories which the members can only tell to other men's wives, and up in the West we do little else except talk finance. The money we used to lose at auction bridge now all goes to our brokers. We worry the lives of our men friends by continually craving for tips."

"Dear me!" Wingate remarked. "I had no idea things were as bad as that."

"Now, what," Sarah asked ingratiatingly, "is your honest opinion about British & Imperial Granaries?"

"If I gave it to you," Wingate replied, "my opinion would be the only honest thing about it."

"Then couldn't one do some good by selling a bear of them?"

"You would do yourself and everyone else more good by not dealing in them at all," Wingate advised. "The whole thing is a terrible gamble."

"When did you arrive?" Kendrick inquired.

"Only last night," he replied. "I have spent the last two days in the north of England. I was rather interested in having a glance at conditions there."

"Might one ask, without being impertinent," Maurice White inquired, addressing Wingate for the first time, "what is your real opinion concerning the directors of the B. & I.?"

Wingate answered him deliberately.

"I am hardly a fair person to ask," he said, "because Peter

hipps is a personal enemy of mine. However, since you have asked the question, I should say that Phipps is utterly unscrupulous and possesses every qualification of a blackguard. Rees, his nephew, is completely under his thumb. Skinflint Martin ought to have died in penal servitude years ago, and as for Drednought—" Wingate was quick to scent disaster. He broke off abruptly in his sentence just as a tall, pale, beautifully gowned woman came toward them.

"It is Lady Drednought," Kendrick whispered in his ear.

Wingate nodded.

"Then I will only say," he concluded, "that Lord Drednought's commercial record hardly entitles him to a seat on the board of any progressive company."

Josephine Drednought, with a smile which gave to her face a singularly sweet expression, deprecated the disturbance which her coming had caused among the little company. The four men had risen to their feet. Kendrick was holding a chair for her. She apparently knew everyone intimately except Wingate. Sarah hastened to present him.

"Mr. Wingate—the Countess of Drednought," she said. "Mr. Wingate has just arrived from New York, Josephine, and he wants to know which are the newest plays worth seeing, and the latest mode in men's ties."

A somewhat curious few seconds



Josephine, Countess of Drednought

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG



Josephine held out her hand. "It was very kind of you to call, Mr. Phipps. I will think over all that you have said, and discuss it—with my husband"

followed upon Sarah's few words of introduction. Wingate's eyes searched the face of the woman, as though he were conjuring up to himself pictures of her in some former state and trying to reconcile them with her present appearance. She, on her side, seemed to be realizing some secret and indefinable pleasure. Her eyes—very large and wonderful eyes they were—seemed to hold some other vision than the vision of this tall, forceful-looking man. It was a moment which no one, perhaps, except those two themselves realized.

"It is a great pleasure to meet Lady Dredlinton," Wingate said. "I hope that Miss Baldwin's remark will not prejudice me in your opinion. I am really not such a frivolous person."

"Even if you were," she rejoined, sinking into the chair which had been brought for her, "a little frivolity from men nowadays is rather in order, isn't it?"

"It's all very well for those who can afford to indulge in it," Kendrick grumbled. "We can't earn our bread and butter now on the Stock Exchange."

"You men are so elusive about your prospects," Sarah declared. "I believe that Jimmy could afford to marry me tomorrow if he'd only make up his mind to it."

"I'm ready to try, anyhow," the young man assured her promptly. "Girls nowadays talk so much rot about giving up their liberty."

"Once a taxi-cab driver, always a taxi-cab driver," Sarah propounded. "Did you know that that was my profession, Mr. Wingate? If you do need anything in the shape of a comfortable conveyance while you are in town, will you remember me? I'll send you a card if you like."

"Don't, for heaven's sake, listen to that young woman," Kendrick begged.

"Her cab's on its last legs," the Honourable Jimmy warned him.

"It isn't as though she could drive," Maurice White put in. "There isn't an insurance company in London will take her on as a risk."

Sarah glanced from one to the other in well-assumed viciousness.

"Don't I hate you all!" she exclaimed bitterly. "I can understand Jimmy, because he likes me to drive him all the time, but you others, who aren't regular clients at all, why you should butt in and try to spoil my chances, I can't think. Mr. Wingate is just my conception of the ideal fare—generous, affable, and with transatlantic notions about tips. I shall send you my card all the same, Mr. Wingate."

"Any chance of your taking me back to the Milan?" Wingate inquired.

Sarah shook her head regretfully, glancing down at her muslin gown.

"Can't you see I'm in my party clothes?" she said. "I did bring the old 'bus down here, but I had a boy meet me and take it away. I'll send you my card and telephone-number, Mr. Wingate. You can rely upon my punctuality and despatch. Even my aunt here would give me a reference if pressed," she added, as their hostess paused for a moment to whisper something in Josephine's ear.

"Your driving's like your life, dear, much too fast for my liking," Lady Amesbury declared. "I hope things are better in your country, Mr. Wingate, but our young people go on anyhow now. Here's my niece drives a taxi-cab and is proud of it; my own daughter designs underclothes and sells them at a shop in Sloane Street to anyone who comes along, and my boy, who ought to go into the Guards, prefers to go into Roger Kendrick's office. What are you going to start him at, Roger?"

"A pound a week and his lunch-money, probably," Kendrick replied.

"I don't think he'll earn it," his fond mother said sadly. "However, that's your business. Don't forget you're dining with me Sunday night, John. I'll ask Josephine, too, if you succeed in making friends with her. She's a little difficult, but well worth knowing. Dear me, I wish people would begin to go! I wonder whether they realize that it is nearly six o'clock."

"I shan't stir a yard," Sarah declared, "until I have had another ice. Jimmy, run and fetch me one."

"My family would be the last to help me out," Lady Amesbury grumbled. "I'm ashamed of the whole crowd of you round here. Roger, you and Mr. White are disgraceful, sitting drinking whiskies and sodas and enjoying yourselves, when you ought to have been walking round the gardens being properly bored."

"I came to enjoy myself, and I have," Kendrick assured her. "To add to my satisfaction, I have met my biggest client—at least, he is my biggest client when he feels like doing things."

"Of course," Lady Amesbury complained, "if you are going to introduce a commercial element into my party—well, why don't you and Maurice, Roger, go and dance about opposite one another, and tear up bits of paper, and pretend to be selling one another things? Hooray! I can see some people beginning to move. I'll go and speed them off the premises."

She hurried away. Sarah drew a sigh of relief.

"Somehow or other," she confessed, "I always feel a sense of tranquillity when my aunt has just departed."

Josephine rose to her feet.

"I think I shall go," she decided, "while the stock of taxi-cabs remains unexhausted."

"If you will allow me," Wingate said, "I will find you one."

Their farewells were a little casual. They were all, in a way, intimates. Kendrick touched Wingate on the shoulder.

"Shall I see you in the City to-morrow?" he asked.



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

All that they remembered was a most amazing spectacle—the spectacle of Wingate smothered profanities, but absolutely

Wingate nodded.

"About eleven o'clock," he said. "There are a few things I want to talk to you about."

"Where shall I send my card?" Sarah called out after him.

"The Milan Hotel," he replied; "with terms, please."

She made a little grimace.

"Terms!" she repeated scornfully. "An American generally pays what he is asked."

"On the contrary," Wingate retorted, "he pays for what he gets."

III

"YOUR address?" Wingate asked, as he handed Josephine into a taxi-cab.

"Dredlington House, Grosvenor Square," she answered. "You mustn't let me take you out of your way, though."

"Will you humor me?" he asked. "There is something I want to say to you, and I don't want to say it here. May we drive to Albert Gate and walk in the park a little way?"

"I should like that very much," she answered.

They spoke hardly at all during their brief drive, or during the first part of their walk in the park. Then he pointed to two chairs under a tree.

"May we sit here?" he begged, leading the way.



walking quietly to the door with Dredlington in his arms, kicking and shouting powerless to free himself

She followed. They sat side by side.

"So one of the dreams of my life has been realized," he said quietly. "I have met Sister Josephine again."

She was for a moment transformed. A delicate pink flush stole through the pallor of her cheeks. She smiled at him.

"I was wondering," she murmured. "You really hadn't forgotten, then?"

"I remember," he told her, "as though it were yesterday, the first time I ever saw you. I was brought into Etaples. It wasn't much of a wound, but it was painful. I remember seeing you in that white-stone hall, in your cool Sister's dress. After the dust and horror of battle, there seemed to be nothing in that wonderful hospital of yours but sunlight and white walls and soft voices. I watched your face as you listened to the details about my case—and I forgot the pain. In the morning, you came to see how I was, and most mornings afterward."

"I am glad that you remember," she murmured.

"I have forgotten nothing," he went on. "I think that those ten days of convalescence out in the gardens of your villa and down by the sea were the most wonderful days I ever spent."

"I love to hear you say so," she confessed.

"Out there," he continued, "the whole show was hideous from beginning to end, a ghastly, terrible drama, played out among all the accompaniments which make hell out of earth. And yet

the thing gripped. The tragedy of Ypres came, and I escaped from the hospital."

"You were not fit to go. They all said that."

"I couldn't help it," he answered. "The guns were there calling, and one forgot—I've been back to England three times since then, and each time one thought was foremost in my mind: 'Shall I meet Sister Josephine?'"

"But you never even made inquiries," she reminded him. "At my hospital, I made it a strict rule that our names in civil life were never to be mentioned or divulged, but afterward you could have found out."

He touched her left hand very lightly, lingered for a moment on her fourth finger.

"It was the ring," he said. "I knew that you were married, and, somehow, knowing that, I desired to know no more."

"And now you probably know a good deal about me," she remarked, with a rather sad smile. "I have been married nine years. I gather that you know my husband by name and repute."

"Your husband is associated with a man whom I have always considered my enemy," he said.

"My husband's friends are not my friends," she rejoined, a little bitterly. "nor does he take me into his confidence as regards his business exploits."

"Then what does it matter?" he asked. "You will let me come and see you?"

She laughed softly.

"I shall be very unhappy if you do not. Come to-morrow afternoon to tea at five o'clock. We can talk of those times on the beach at Etaples. You were rather a pessimist in those days."

"It seems ages ago," he replied. "To-day, at any rate, I feel differently. I knew, when I glanced at Lady Amesbury's card this morning, that something was going to happen. I went to that stupid garden-party all agog for adventure."

"Am I the adventure?" she asked lightly.

He would have answered her question lightly, but he found it impossible. A great part of his success in life had been due to his inspiration. He knew perfectly well that she was to be the adventure of his life.

"It is so restful here," she said presently, "and I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed our meeting, but, alas," she added, glancing at her watch, "you see the time—and I am dining out. We will walk to Hyde Park Corner and you must find me a cab."

He rose to his feet at once, and they strolled slowly along on the unfrequented footpath.

"I hope so much," she went on, "that my husband's connection with the man you dislike will not make any difference. You will not like him, and he will not understand you, but you need not see much of him. Our ways, unfortunately, have lain apart for some time."

"You have your troubles," he said quietly. "I knew it when you first began to talk to me at Etaples."

"I have my troubles," she admitted. "You will understand them when you know me better. Sometimes I think they are more than I can bear. To-night, I feel inclined to make light of them. It is a great thing to have friends. I have so few."

"I am a little ambitious," he ventured. "I do not wish to take my place among the rank and file. I want to be something different to you in life—more than anyone else. If affection and devotion count, I shall earn my place."

Her eyes were filled with tears as she gave him her hand.

"Indeed," she assured him, "you are there already. You have been there in my thoughts for so long. If you wish to keep your place, you will find very little competition. I am rather a dull woman these days, and I have so little to give."

He smiled confidently as he stopped a taxi-cab and handed her in.

"May I not be the judge of that?" he begged. "Giving depends upon the recipient, you know. You have given me more happiness within this last half-hour than I have had since we parted in France."

"You are very easily satisfied," she murmured.

Though he opened his lips to speak, the words remained unsaid. Something warned him that here was a woman passing through something like a crisis in her life, that a single false step on his part might be fatal. He stood hat in hand and watched the taxi-cab turn up Park Lane.

IV

THERE was a little flutter of excitement in the offices of Messrs. Kendrick, Stone, Morgan, & Co. when, a few minutes after eleven the following morning, Wingate pushed open the swing doors of the large general office and inquired for Mr. Kendrick. Without a moment's delay, he was shown into Roger Kendrick's private room, but the little thrill caused by his entrance did not at once pass away. Action of some sort seemed to be in the air.

Even Roger Kendrick, as he shook hands with his client, was conscious of a little thrill of expectation. Wingate was a man who brought with him almost a conscious sense of power. He would have appeared a formidable adversary in any game in which he chose to take a hand. Whatever his present intentions were, however, he seemed in no hurry to declare himself. The two men spoke for a few minutes on outside subjects. Wingate referred to the garden-party of the afternoon before, led the conversation with some skill round to the subject of Josephine Dredlington, and listened to what the other man had to say.

"Everyone is sorry for Lady Dredlington," Kendrick pronounced. "Why she married Dredlington is one of the mysteries of the world. He is rotten to the core. He's such a wrong 'un, to tell you the truth, that I'm surprised Phipps put him on the board. His name is long past doing anyone any good."

"Lady Dredlington did not strike me as having altogether the air of an unhappy woman," Wingate observed tentatively.

Kendrick shrugged his shoulders.

"No fundamentally good woman is ever unhappy," he said. "or, rather, never shows it. But the people who know her best never cease to feel sorry for her."

"You have those figures I sent you a wireless for?" Wingate asked, a little abruptly.

"I have them here," Kendrick replied, producing a little roll of papers from a drawer. "In some respects, these fellows seem to have had the most amazing luck. Unless we come to an understanding with Russia within the next month, of which there doesn't seem to me to be the slightest prospect, we shall get no wheat from there for at least another year."

"And the harvests all over eastern Europe were shocking," Wingate said, half to himself.

"It doesn't seem to me," Kendrick pointed out, "that more than dribbles can be expected from anywhere, except, of course, the greatest source of all, Canada and the United States."

"You've no indication of the government's attitude?"

"I don't suppose they have one," Kendrick answered, "upon that or any other subject. Of course, if all the wheat that's being stored in the country under the auspices of the B. & I. stood in their own name, the matter would appear in a different light, but they've been infernally clever with all these subsidiary companies. They own a majority of shares in each, without a doubt, but they conduct their transactions as though they were absolutely independent concerns."

Wingate studied the figures in the document he was holding

for some minutes in thoughtful silence. The telephone-bell rang at Kendrick's elbow. He picked up the receiver and listened.

"That Kendrick?" a voice inquired.

"Speaking," Kendrick answered.

"This is Peter Phipps. Say, I am told that John Wingate, of New York, is a client of yours."

Kendrick passed across a spare receiver to Wingate and paused for a moment while the latter held it to his ear.

"He is," Kendrick admitted.

"Well, I am given to understand that he is coming into the City to do business," Phipps continued. "If he is in any way disposed to be a seller, we are buyers of wheat for autumn delivery at market price, perhaps even a shade over."

"Any quantity?" Kendrick inquired.

"A hundred thousand—anything up to a million bushels, if Mr. Wingate feels like coming in big. Anyway, we're ready to talk business. Will you put it up to your client?"

"I will."

"Shall you be seeing him soon?"

"This morning, probably."

"Thought you might," the voice at the other end of the telephone observed. "Give him my compliments, and say I hope we may make a deal together."

"Certainly," Kendrick promised. "Good-morning."

The two men laid down their receivers. Kendrick's eyes twinkled.

"Well, that fellow's a sport, anyway," he declared.

"I suppose, in one sense of the word, he is," Wingate admitted. "So he wants me to sell him wheat, eh? It looks a good thing at these prices, Kendrick, doesn't it?"

"That's for you to say," was the cautious reply. "These big deals in commodities which have to be delivered on a certain date always seem to me a little out of the sphere of legitimate gambling."

"At the same time," Wingate remarked, "the price of wheat to-day is scandalous. If the B. & I. forced it up any higher, I should think that the government must intervene."

"It would be devilish difficult," Kendrick pointed out, "to trace the whole thing to the B. & I."

Wingate took a cigarette from the open box upon the office table, lighted it, and smoked for a moment thoughtfully.

"Kendrick," he said, "I am a good friend and a good enemy. Peter Phipps is my enemy. Each of us in his heart desires nothing so much in the world as the ruin of the other."

"What was the start of this feeling?" Kendrick asked.

"A woman," Wingate replied shortly, "and that's all there is to be said about it, Kendrick. I shall hate Peter Phipps as long as I live for the sake of the girl he ruined, and he will hate me because of the thrashing I gave him. Ever noticed the scar on his right cheek, Kendrick?"

"Often," the stockbroker replied. "He told me that it was done in a saloon fight out in the Far West."

"I did it in the Far East," Wingate declared grimly. "as far east, at least, as the drawing-room of his Fifth Avenue house. He'll never lose that scar. He'll never lose his hatred of the man who gave it to him. So he wants me to sell him wheat!"

"It's a pretty dangerous thing to introduce feelings of this sort into business," Kendrick remarked.

"You're right," Wingate admitted. "It makes one careful. I'm not selling any wheat to-day, Kendrick."

"It will be a disappointment to the office," the other remarked. "Personally, I'm glad."

"Oh, I'll keep your office busy," Wingate promised. "I'm not coming into the City for nothing, I can assure you. There are five commissions for you," he went on, drawing a sheet of paper from the rack and writing on it rapidly. "That will keep your office busy for a time. I'll give you a check for fifty thousand pounds. Don't ring me up unless you want more margin."

The stockbroker's eyes glistened as he looked through the list. "You're a good judge, Wingate," he said. "You'll make money on most of these."

"I expect I shall," Wingate acknowledged. "Anyhow, it will keep you people busy and serve as a sort of visiting-card here for me until—"

"Until what?" Kendrick asked, breaking a short pause.

"Until I can make up my mind how to deal with those fellows. On paper, it still looks a good thing to sell them wheat, you know. Peter Phipps has something up his sleeve for me, though. I've got to try and find out what it is."

"You'll excuse me for a moment?" Kendrick begged. "I'm only a human being, and I can't hold a (Continued on page 148)



My Road to Faith

*The Religion of a
Nature-Loving Man*

By

James Oliver Curwood

IT has been some time since I sat down to work at my table under the tall spruce trees. I have had an experience during the past five or six days which is one of my rewards for letting nature live, and, for a space, it quite completely upset me, so far as work was concerned.

In other words, I have been having an experience with a species of vermin which I love. The baby vermin of this particular species are, to me, almost as lovable and quite as cute in their ways as human babies; and for the adult vermin, the mothers and fathers of the babies, I have a far greater love and respect than I have for many males and females of my own breed.

I am speaking of bears. A few years ago, one of my most thrilling sports was to hunt them—blacks, grizzlies, and polars. Now I consider them, in a way, my brothers, and I am having a lot of fun in the comradeship. I am filled with resentment when I consider that in all the states of this country, with the exception of two or three, the law says these friends of mine are "vermin," along with lice and fleas and maggots, and that they



Mr.
Curwood
writing
in the wilds

may be killed on sight, babies and all. If every human mother in the land could hold a baby cub in her arms for five minutes, there would be such an uprising of feminine sympathy that the laws would be repealed.

In thinking again of our mothers, I would give a good year of my life if a million of them could have seen what I have seen during the past few days. For, after all, I believe that nearly all great movements toward better and bigger and more beautiful things must and will begin with women. No amount of "equal-



A camping-place in the Far North



The life in a two-legged animal who can talk is the same as that in some other animal which cannot talk



Where life is hard and real

when man comes to that point, where he casts off his arrogance and his ego, then will the time have come for the birth of a satisfying and universal faith in that great and all-embracing Power which we know and speak of in our own language as "God."

And the very foundation of this faith, I believe, will be an understanding of *all* life, the acknowledgment, at last, that man himself may not be a more precious physical manifestation of the supreme vital force than many of the other created things about him.

It is because I believe that nature, the mother of all life, is trying to teach us this great truth in a thousand or a million different ways, in the smoke and grime and crush of big cities as well as in farm-land and forest, that I come back to my little experience with the bears.

About six or seven miles to the north of me is a great ridge, plainly visible from one of the half-way limbs of my lookout spruce, a sort of barrier which rises up between me and the still vaster hinterland beyond it. Sometime in the past, a fire swept over it, so that now it is covered with a gorgeous and

ity" will ever take that blessed superiority to men away from them.

To-day, even religion, shameful to men as the fact may be, rests on a pillar of women's white shoulders, and all the faith that the world possesses first finds its resting-place in their soft breasts. And I look ahead to the day, with unbounded faith of my own, when women will see, and understand, and begin the great fight toward comradeship with all that other life which is so utterly dependent about them now.

Then shall we have a "religion of nature," with a force and a might behind it which will glorify the earth, and man will come to realize that he is not God, but only an insignificantly small part of God's handiwork. And

splendid growth of young birch and poplars, and virile patches of vines on which, a little later, there will be an abundance of strawberries, raspberries, rose-berries, and black currants. It is also richly sprinkled with mountain-ash trees, which give promise of a yield of hundreds of bushels of fruit this late summer and autumn. Altogether, it is an ideal feeding-range for wild things, hoof, claw, and feathers. Three times I have traveled for miles along the cap of this ridge. To me, in all its richness and promise, it is a glorious manifestation of Life.

On my first visit to the ridge, being overtaken by storm, I built me a brush shelter in a lovely spot close to it, with a tiny creek of spring-cold water not more than a dozen paces away. On my third and last visit, I returned to this spot, and ran face on into my adventure.

From the sheltered bower of balsams where I had built my wigwam, I could look up a rolling, meadowy breast of the ridge, so perfect in its adornment of vine and bush and small clumps of young trees that, to one not entirely acquainted with the exquisite art of nature, it would almost seem as though a human landscape-architect had laid it out. On this particular morning, coming up quietly, my eyes were greeted by an amazingly pretty spectacle. The green hillside was in full possession of two families of black bears.

So close was the nearest of them to me that I dropped like a shot behind a big rock, and, the breath of air that was stirring being in my favor, I was at a splendid vantage-point to take in the whole scene. Within forty yards of me were a mother and three cubs, and a little higher up—perhaps twice that distance—were a mother and two cubs.

For two hours, I did not move from my place of concealment. That spectacle of motherhood and babyhood on the hillside, with the virile and luxuriant life of nature pulsing and beating all about it, was a new chapter in my book of religion. It was being pointed out to me, in perhaps a hundredth or a



The sheltered bower of balsams where I had built my wigwam

thousandth lesson, that all life is the same, and that it is only language, or the want of language, that makes the difference in the "life-relationship" of all created things. I could fancy, as I lay there, just how the Supreme Arbiter of things had given physical being to all this life that was about me, as well as the life that was in me. It has all come from the same dynamo, so to speak—a spark of it in each tree, a spark of it in each flower and shrub and blade of grass, a spark of it in each of the beasts of flesh and blood on the hillside, and a spark of it in me. Our life was the same. It had all come from the same vital source, from the same supreme fount of existence. Yet how different were the forms it animated!

But I could see little difference between my bears on the hillside and two human mothers and their children, except in their physical appearance, and the fact that the humans would undoubtedly have made a great deal more noise. But the bears were handsomer—begging the ladies' pardon. Their sleek coats shone like black satin in the sun, and the cubs were cute enough to hug to death. But they were a worry to their mothers for all that, and especially one of them, who appeared to be the hog-it-all member of the family nearer me. Whenever the mother bear pawed over a stone or pulled down a tender bush, this little customer was always there ahead of the rest of the family, licking up the choicest grubs and ants, and getting the first mouthful of greens. Half a dozen times, the mother slapped him with her paw, rolling him over like a fat ball. But there could have been no very great corrective power in the cuffings, or else he was toughened to them by usage, for he was back on the job again without very much loss of time.

For almost two hours, the bears fed on the hillside. Several times, the two families drew so near together that the cubs intermingled and the mothers almost rubbed sides. Bears do fight when they meet—sometimes—just like humans, only not as often. But it is my duty to relate that these bears were at peace on this particular day, and that they seemed to enjoy the mutual companionship. It was all so fine that I had an impelling desire to go up on the hillside and become a comrade with them. When the feeding was over, and the cubs were wrestling and running about in play, I almost rose up from behind my rock to call out my friendship to them. The lack of one thing held me back—that one thing which all nature is crying out for—a *language*. I feel they would have welcomed me could I have told them I was a friend, and wanted to play with them, and make them a present of some sugar. But, instead of that, this is what happened:

In their play, two of the cubs had descended within twenty feet of my rock. One of these was the gormand. Somehow, he lost his balance, rolled over, and came tumbling down. When he stopped, he was not more than half a dozen feet from me. As he brought his fat little body to its feet, he saw me. His eyes fairly popped. It seemed to me that for a full minute he did not move or breathe. Then there came out of him a little, piggyish grunt, and he was off. He did not stop when he reached his mother and the other cubs, but seemed to hit it still faster for the top of the ridge. The mother looked after him, sniffed the air, and rose to her feet. In half a minute, she was lumbering after him, the two remaining cubs hustling ahead of her.

A hundred yards away, the second mother bear took the warning. In a very short time, they had all disappeared over the cap of the ridge. I had not shown myself. I had made no sound. The wind was still in my favor. Yet the frightened cub had given the warning to them all. From no other creature but man would they have fled like that. Even in the face of a pack of wolves, the mothers would have turned to fight. Something had told them that man was near—yet only the cub had seen and smelled that man, and he had probably never seen or smelled another. Yet he knew, and all the others knew, that man was the deadliest of all enemies. And I am half convinced, as I write this, that nature has at least the beginning of a universal language, that the centuries and hundreds of centuries have given it four words, and these words are: "Man is our enemy." I might fancy that the winds carry these words, that the tree-tops whisper them, that they are in the undertone of running waters, that all life outside of man and man's pitifully few friends has, in some strange way, come to learn them. It is, I confess, an elusive sort of fancy, but it sets one to thinking.

It makes one wonder, for instance, why man is so jealous of himself. The Supreme Power is immeasurable, he tells himself. It has no such a thing as limitation. Heaven, no matter in what form he may conceive it, is utterly boundless. Yet he is jealous of it. He does not want to concede that any other life but that of his own breed will form a part of it. He has tried,

through unnumbered centuries, to fool himself into the belief that he is the one and only thing in all creation upon which the ruling Power of the universe has its guardian eye. He has not conceded that an all-powerful but tender God might love flowers and birds and trees and many other living things as well as he loves man. And, as I sit here under my spruce trees again, it seems to me that, just because he has been so near-sighted, man has not yet found a faith which is all-comforting and of which he is utterly sure.

I seem to see a very clear reason for this. In this age, though still fettered by his egoism, man is not utterly blind to his own deformities. As "civilization" progresses, he sees more and more what a monster he has been in the past, and what a monster in many ways he is to-day. He sees his breed committing every crime known to the ages, from petty larceny to world-slaughters that devastate nations. He sees everywhere the strong taking advantage of the weak. He sees millions go hungry and cold that a few may profit. In great convention-halls, he sees the "statesmen" that rule the destiny of a mighty nation cutting capers and acting generally like a lot of silly little children. He sees every man in a great game fighting to see who can accumulate the most dollars, no matter at what cost to the others. He sees sickening and disgusting fads come and go. He looks on a world-brothel of iniquity, of discontent, of avarice and greed and butchery among men. Nowhere does he see the stability, the dignity, and the mighty forces of good that should walk hand in hand with "the chosen of God."

He is beginning to see himself, at last, as a contemptible specimen of life—in spite of his brain and his inventions.

He is beginning to understand that the most perfect air-ship his brain will ever conceive cannot take him to heaven.

He is beginning to realize that there is a thing greater than brain, greater than mechanical progress.

And as he comes to understand more and more how imperfect a thing he is, the more unstable his faith becomes; and the sacrilegious thought comes to him, unconsciously but with terrific force: "If I am the chosen handiwork of God, then I can have no very great faith in the judgment and workmanship of God."

And, as the suspicion grows upon him that he may *not* be the "one and only" child of God, he cries out wildly in these modern days for evidence. He tries to bring spirits back from the dead that they may offer him some proof. He quests vainly for "revelations" that may satisfy him. He says with his mouth, "Yes; I believe absolutely in God," yet, in his heart, he knows that he is half-lying, because of fear of what his neighbor will think if he speaks the truth. He wants to believe there is a God. He wants to *know* there is a God. Yet he is afraid.

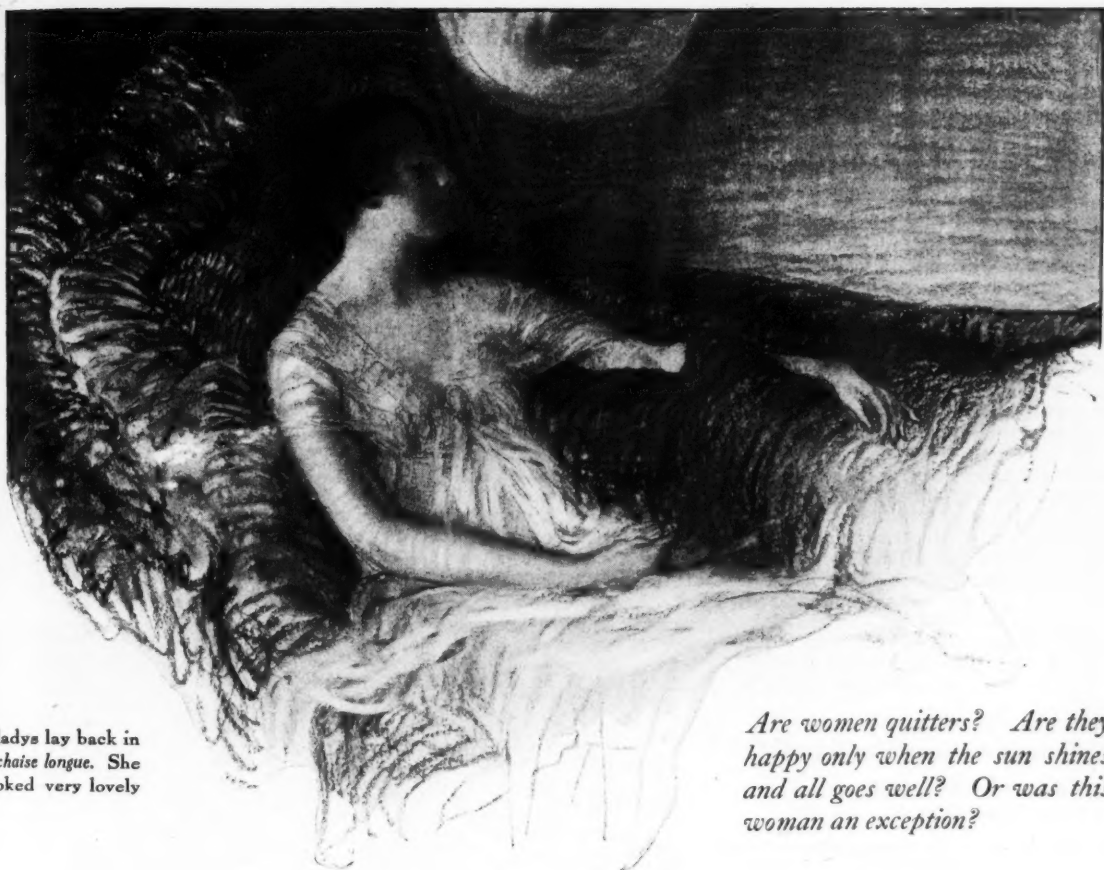
And, personally, I am glad that the time has come when he is afraid. I think it is the real beginning of his salvation and the dropping-away of his egoism. To-day he is beginning to see all life as he did not see it yesterday. And to-morrow his eyes will be wide open.

That is my faith. I believe that God is greater than humanity has ever conceived him to be. I think he is "a common sort of fellow," and I write these words with all the holy reverence of which the soul is capable. I do not mean to imply that I think he is in my form, or in any particular form. But he is Life. And it is his intention and his desire that every living thing that is worthy of life be a part of him. I find great peace and contentment in my faith that this God is everywhere, and that we may meet him face to face fifty times a day if we throw off the hard shell of our egoism, and realize that all nature is God—and that we, as men and women and children, are a part of that all-embracing nature.

Even now the sun is filtering through the tree-branches upon this partly written page. I look at it, and I see again the inconceivable greatness of the Supreme Power, and my own microscopic littleness. For we of the earth have thought that the earth is great, and that we, having inherited the earth, are of all things greatest. Yet is that sun which warms and lights my page as I write, more than a million times as large as the earth, more than eight hundred thousand miles from one end of its diameter to the other. And the still more stupendous fact is that this sun is itself only a small bit of mechanism in the mighty forces of infinity, for there are a *hundred million other suns in space*, each lighting and warming its own worlds.

Just so great and vast and all-embracing is the handiwork of that vital force which rules all infinity—and to which we have given the name of God.

And here I emphasize again that great (Continued on page 131)



Gladys lay back in a chaise longue. She looked very lovely

Are women quitters? Are they happy only when the sun shines and all goes well? Or was this woman an exception?

Rings and Chains

By Zoë Akins

Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard

THEY rode from the office in silence; the chauffeur stopped as directed in front of the Ronalds' house. The Smiths' car was standing at the curb, which meant that Arthur, the Ronalds' chauffeur, need not wait. So he took the car round to the garage, and the two men, still silent, still brooding heavily, went up the steps and entered the house.

The hats and heavy coats in the hall signified several guests. Voices drifted out from the drawing-room; voices came also from the library on the second floor. So George Ronalds beckoned his brother-in-law to follow, and led the way to his own sitting-room—a small, book-lined chamber that seemed to draw close round its fine fireplace.

"Sit down," the host urged.

But Frederick Stetson Smith remained standing.

"You're determined?" George Ronalds asked presently.

"Absolutely."

"By God, I can't stand by and see you do a thing like this!"

"You can't help it, George; and you wouldn't try, really, would you? We've never interfered with each other. We both agreed, when we were talking about poor Starkland that time, that a man has a right to go when he's ready. You know that I'm not a coward—you know that it isn't that."

George Ronalds thought suddenly of his brother-in-law's daring and brilliant career—brilliant, though it had brought them now to this—to irretrievable ruin financially.

"Of course you're not a coward," he said presently; "but you're doing the wrong thing. You are not treating Lelia right, or the boy, or yourself."

"But it's for them. So that there will be something left—more than I could ever earn for them now."

"We can start again."

"How? We'd have no capital."

"We'd find a way."

"No; they've always called me unsound in this town. I had too much imagination; they never quite approved of my business methods." He smiled slightly and continued, "However, I never landed in jail, as they used to predict at first."

"This will break Lelia's heart," George Ronalds said, after the pause that followed—a pause in which he had cast about for some heartening suggestion as to a new start for his brother-in-law and himself, but had been able to find none. What Frederick Smith said was true; they did regard him in this slowly moving, conservative city as "unsound," "too daring," "radical"—a man to leave alone in a business way in spite of his great ability. They still regarded him as a stranger, though he had appeared in their midst twenty-six years before—coming from nowhere, and suddenly commanding attention by the big deals that he had promoted with outside capital. Then, after a year or two, he had become the suitor for the hand of Lelia Emery, one of the famous but impoverished Colonel Emery's daughters. George Ronalds, who was, at that time, engaged to Laura, Lelia's sister, had shared the general distrust regarding Frederick Smith; but all that had changed later when they were brothers-in-law, and when each had begun to depend upon the other for a certain sympathy—a certain understanding that each shared of the other's lot—for their wives were true "wearers of rings and chains," and each left her husband a little sad and a little lonely.

Time had worn away the first sense of lack, however, in the hearts of the men so related; and George Ronalds had eventually put the fortune that he had inherited at the disposal of Frederick Smith for investment. For years, both had prospered astonishingly, although the belief in the financial circles of the town had not altered regarding the uncertainty and unscrupulousness of Frederick Smith's achievements. George Ronalds was better liked and perfectly trusted, but he was considered the weak

victim of his brother-in-law, and people had always expected the complete failure that had come at last.

Frederick Smith smiled at the idea of breaking his wife's heart.

"I wish my ghost could come back and see whose heart is least injured—Laura's or Lelia's—a year from now," he said. "I'm going to leave Lelia comparatively well off; you're going to stand by and meet the storm, even though you're cleaned out, and your family is going to know what real poverty is."

"A family that won't stand by a man under such circumstances isn't worth dying for," George Ronalds said somberly. Then he continued: "Besides, Lelia and Laura have been poor before; things were pretty difficult when they were girls. We've given them everything we've had for nearly twenty-five years now, and I sometimes think that Laura is as tired as I am of the way we've been living. I think this may make a great difference. I'll stand the gaff, anyway, and do the best I can."

Sudden tears came into his eyes. Then his courage went. He saw himself going about asking his friends for some sort of work. He heard them telling him that they had always warned him to steer clear of his brother-in-law. He sat down heavily.

"Nobody hopes you are right more than I do," Frederick Smith said, his voice husky with feeling. "God knows, I wish I had the nerve to take it the way you do, but I'm all in. I'll get out—that's all I can do. I'll make it look like an accident, but I'll see that Lelia knows the truth. It might be kinder to let her only guess at it, but I'm sort of like a child about one thing—I like to be thanked. That isn't quite what I mean, either. I mean that I want her to know that I went the limit for her. I've always cared a lot about my wife, George—and my boy, too, of course."

George Ronalds stood up.

"Let's see this thing through together—the right way, Fred."

But the other man shook his head.

"No; I've finished," he said.

In the library, Gladys Ronalds and Lord Charles Paisley were saying good-by. She hadn't been able to make him say much that she was anxious to hear, but he was a little less reticent than usual, and had seemed glad to be alone with her for an intimate talk this last afternoon. He was leaving to-morrow. Gladys hated to think of his going. Beyond everything she had ever dreamed of wanting before, she now wanted this young man to want her to marry him. She knew that he didn't consider himself well off, but she supposed that she would have money enough for both of them. He was the most attractive person she had ever met in her life—and she felt that almost any girl in the world would find it easy to care for him.

Gladys was twenty-three; she had been out four years; she was very handsome and tremendously ambitious. She had met no one before who so completely attracted her as Lord Charles; added to this great personal appeal was the fact of his high position as the son of an English peer. He, too, was attracted; he liked her rather severe beauty, her calm, her dignity; and he thought her superb at the sports he liked best. But he was very shy of girls; he didn't want to rush into matrimony, and, in many ways, he found Americans rather alarming. In an exterior way, he admired Gladys a great deal, but he was far from sure that he would ever want to marry her. Yet curiosity and congeniality are strong magnets, and she drew him with both.

"Look here," he said, after she had spoken wistfully of his departure; "look here: It's too bad that I have to be off, but I booked up for this trip to Alaska before I came over. But why don't you come, too?"

"Mightn't it be—awkward?" she asked breathlessly.

"I don't see why. The Bradleys got the party up, and I'll ask Miriam Bradley to write to you to come along. Would you do it?"

She hesitated, flushing.

"Of course I'll do it—if I'm asked—if it's perfectly convenient for everyone," she said, after a moment.

The happiness in her eyes made him both glad and sorry that he had made the suggestion. However, he felt, American girls were always going about. She'd enjoy it, at any rate.

He rose, looking at the watch on his wrist.

"I must be off," he said. "Let's hope we're not saying good-by at all; you'll come along next month, surely." She gave him her hands; he held both. "I won't go in and say good-by to the others; I haven't time. You'll tell them for me, won't you?"

"Yes," she answered.

"*Au revoir*, and thanks for being awfully good to me."

"*Au revoir*," she said, smiling.

After he had gone, Gladys went to her own room; she wished to be alone. In the mirror of her dressing-table, she caught the reflection of herself, from where she lay back in a *chaise longue*. She looked very lovely.

Mrs. Ronalds and Mrs. Smith took their tea without sugar or cream; Aline Ronalds and Frederick Smith, junior laughed at them, and took theirs with cream and three lumps each; also, they ate all the sandwiches and all the toast and jam. Stuart Grayson, coming in late, got only cold tea and a bit of cake. Harold Shaw, coming even later, stood a moment by the fire, complimenting Aline on her success as a *débutante*.

"I always find Grayson here," he said, "which means that you lead the bunch. Grayson always plays the winner. He's been



There was a pause; then Ronalds said sharply: "I never want

going that ever since he and I were deadly rivals for your mother's favors at her first grown-up party."

Laura Ronalds smiled. Lelia Smith did not smile; she had always felt a sense of unease concerning her sister and Harold Shaw. Remembering, as she did, Laura's old infatuation for this man, it was disturbing to find him still coming to her house as an intimate even after her younger daughter was out. Lelia had suggested more than once to her sister that Harold Shaw had had his chance and had not been eager to take it. But Laura had only responded,

"You know very well that Harold never had any money."

There are many kinds of poverty. Harold Shaw's was the kind that can afford clubs, a horse or two, a car, and the pursuit of pleasure generally—but not an expensive wife.

Stuart Grayson, however, could have afforded a harem. But he was exceedingly tedious as a companion, and exceedingly canny. He had married, in time, a very young and very beautiful girl from another city, who had borne him two children and then died during the fourth year of her marriage. It was not long before the widower presented himself in society again, and, from that time on, devoted himself to the youngest and most attractive girls that each season brought forth. People said that his fortune was not so great as formerly, but he continued to give splendid entertainments. He was even more cautious than before about being married for his money, how-

ever, as he already had two young sons for heirs, and was perfectly contented with his single state.

Harold Shaw continued his teasing for a few moments. Then a servant entered to say that Mr. Smith was waiting in the car, and Mrs. Smith rose to go.

"Why didn't Fred come in?" Laura asked.

"I don't know," Lelia answered, with a little shrug. "He's not an extremely polite person, you know; perhaps he's tired. Are you coming, Teddy?" she added, to her son.

"I might as well," he answered carelessly. "I've got to dress. See you at the Hitchcock's later, Aline," he called back.

Teddy danced and played bridge extremely well. Otherwise, he was without distinction—tall, thin, and blond, he might have been a chorus-man, a tailor's clerk, or a neatly dressed waiter. But among his friends he was amazingly popular.

Frederick Smith had left his brother-in-law and gone directly to the car, sending word to his wife that he was waiting. Even the briefest casual conversation with the others in the drawing-room had seemed impossible.

As they drove home, Lelia talked of Lord Charles and his devotion to Gladys, of Aline's success—much greater than any Gladys had ever had.

"Gladys is more dignified, and the rather silly girls get on best," she declared. Gladys was her favorite.

"Aline has more pep," Teddy put in; "you've got to give it to



to see either of you again as long as I live, unless you are willing to live as I live, where I live, willingly and dutifully"

Rings and Chains

her—she can get a crowd going and keep it going. Gladys is all right on the links or on a horse, but Aline's got the personality."

His mother scolded him for their difference of opinion; then she began to speak of the things that she must attend to. Her furs were rather shabby; she must have new ones. She didn't know what to do about the limousine—Teddy had to have it every night, it seemed. She thought that, when he had a car of his own, he might permit her to use her own some of the time.

"But mine's an open car," Teddy said, pleading for understanding. "You can't expect girls to go in an open car at night—when they're all dressed up."

Then why didn't he get a small coupé instead of a roadster? It was no fun in a coupé in the daytime. He hated driving himself, anyway, except when he drove his speedster, and drove her fast.

"Then get your father to give you a small town car; I can't have you taking this one every evening. I've had to use your aunt Laura's twice this week."

Mrs. Smith thought very well of the idea of another closed car, now that she had not heard a protest from her husband.

"It is just as well to have a smaller car," she commented. "This thing is a monster. Big cars have no distinction. Teddy can use this; he likes to have a crowd with him always. But we'll have to get a second chauffeur. Don't expect me to give up Arthur or Burbank." She was determined not to be cheated out of her chauffeur or her footman; she had had trouble enough getting satisfactory ones.

Her husband hardly heard what she was saying. He was thinking how he would like to reach out and take her hand—and hold it for a little while.

"I suppose I can have a drink if I will go and hunt for it?" Harold Shaw suggested.

"I'll help you find one," Laura replied, rising, as he knew she would. They went into the dining-room, leaving Aline thanking Grayson Stuart for the orchids.

Harold made a high-ball for himself at a side-table; then he joined Laura, who was standing by a window, looking out. A chaos of snow had begun to fall—twisted and driven by the wind. The street-lamps were burning in the early dusk.

Laura's age was forty-four years, but, with the modern woman's passion for the three superlative luxuries—beauty, youth, and romance—she had kept herself so well in hand and had managed her toilet so cleverly that she suggested the mysterious charms of maturity rather than the comfortable heaviness of middle age. Perhaps she had succeeded because she had set herself to the definite purpose of keeping Harold Shaw in love with her. And yet she considered that, during her entire married life, she had been "true" to her husband.

If she had happened to have married Harold Shaw instead, their feeling for one another would probably have diminished into a trivial and banal relationship. As it was, something unique existed between them. Both were selfish, hard, shrewd. He was grateful to her for marrying some one else; she was piqued because he had let her do so. Her bitterness and pride made a surface against which he flung his furtive devotion with the comfortable knowledge that she was no fool. The long

game that they played grew tiresome at times. Then they called a halt; again the spell that they had for each other drew them together. It was, on the whole, a little exciting, and very pleasant. Under the guise of old and frank friendship, they played safely enough.

He still thought her the most attractive woman he had ever known; she considered him the most fastidious man, and it pleased her to please him. When they knew each other so well and trusted each other so completely and understood the situation so definitely, he could not comprehend why she had always refused a discreet *liaison*. He knew that she cared for him; he knew that she knew that he cared for her. It seemed so simple to him.

Laura, on the other hand, could not comprehend why any woman ever went in for a *liaison* unless she had something to gain by it. She felt that she could gain nothing, not even Howard's devotion, and would lose everything in the event of discovery—position, fortune, and even Howard himself. Her creed was shallow but practical—that people want what they cannot get. There had been moods, recently, however, when she questioned the wisdom of her course. She wondered if she were not cheating herself of something very thrilling—something that she had never found in matrimony. She felt sure that she had been wise in a worldly sense, but, when she faced the fact that she was well past forty, she had vague regrets for missing something that perhaps might have made her life a little richer—more memorable, more complete. But she had grown daughters, a husband, position—things too precious for any but a fool to risk.

"Laura?" said Howard, in a low voice.

"Yes?"

"I'm going to New York next week."

"Are you?"

"Yes. Don't you need some clothes—or something?"

"One always needs clothes, but it isn't absolutely necessary to go to New York in the middle of the season for them."

"We'd meet—very openly, if you were there, too—and I'd take you around a lot. Or we'd dodge everyone. Give me just a week in New York, Laura."

She had, for an instant, a blind wish for that week—a blind fear that she was putting something from her that she would do well to take. Then she shivered back from the thought of possible consequences.

"No; it's not to be thought of," she said. "I'm not that sort of woman, my dear," she added, a little irresolutely, as she reached out and touched his hand. "But I really need some clothes; I think I will go to New York—but I'll take Gladys or Aline. You understand, Howard, that, if we see each other there, it must be perfectly conventionally—like this."

Aline whistled as the maid who served her and her sister got her into a new and very becoming evening dress. Some one knocked at the door.

"Mr. Ronalds wants Miss Aline to come to his study before she goes out," a servant announced.

Aline stopped whistling and wondered.

Gladys had decided to have a tray sent up to her room; she did not feel inclined to see anyone tonight. To-morrow morn-

ing she would tell her mother about Lord Charles and Alaska, but to-night she wanted to be alone. She had changed to a negligée and picked up a novel. But she did not read. Her thoughts were busy with the future. She felt very certain of the future now—to-night—

"Mr. Ronalds would like to have you come to his study, miss, as soon as possible, miss," was the amazing message that a maid came to her door to bring. Gladys rose slowly and threw away her cigarette and went to see what her father could possibly have to say to her.

Laura Reynolds was viewing herself in a long mirror when her husband's request was announced to her maid by the one who



George Ronalds wondered a little why he sat still and let a strange man talk to him like this



"It isn't true! It can't be true!" Laura kept repeating tragically

came to the door. Laura did not hurry. She was not curious. She was interested in the mirror. She saw there a tall, slender woman, very blond and delicate and gracious, with red lips and gray eyes set about by haunting shadows—few actresses were more expert with rouge and powder and kohl. And she liked the gown that she saw reflected particularly—no one wore that shade of royal blue with more effect than she. But she took off the diamonds and the sapphires, and decided to wear her pearls instead. The maid again brought from the safe the big ash-wood box with its three velvet-lined trays. Laura decided that pearls were much better.

"Take my cloak down, Cécile," she said, "and tell Rogers that I want the motor immediately. If it isn't there, have him telephone."

Then she took the gloves that Cécile gave her, the exquisite little handkerchief, the little ivory-and-gold vanity case—a trinket that Marie Antoinette might have adored—and the delightful fan. She paused again in front of the mirror while a throw of deep-blue tulle was put about her shoulders. Then she, too, went to hear whatever it was that her husband had to say.

He stood apologetically before the fire, shivering a little, as though its warmth did not reach him; but he smiled bravely at his wife and daughters.

"I'm sorry to bother you to-night—just when you're going out," he began, "but it will be in all the papers to-morrow morning, and I wanted to tell you, first, myself—I wanted you to know that I'm going to do my best—"

II

GEORGE RONALDS rose wearily from the seat in the crowded street-car that he had secured half a moment before and touched a pale-faced, shabbily dressed girl on the arm. He was too tired for speech, and she was too dulled by the long day in the shop to find any word of thanks. She looked at him with dumb gratitude and stumbled into the space that he had made for her by moving away. Swinging to a strap, he tried to read the head-lines of the evening paper, but it was impossible. His eyes hurt; his head ached, and he was so continually jostled that he could not follow even the heavily typed words. Half an hour later, he left the car. His street was clean and new and far out; (Continued on page 92)

The Wildcatter

There's more than money in oil; there's human interest, romance, high adventure, fascinating character-study. Here is the first of several short stories of the Texas fields by William MacHarg

Illustrated by

W. H. D. Koerner

THE man in charge of the oil-well being drilled on the hill farm of John Pell, some distance out of Ranger—by name George Rockridge, and aged twenty-nine—had the face of a gambler. But it was that of the gambler who pits himself not against other men but in the open and against nature. In the language of oil, he was a "wildcatter."

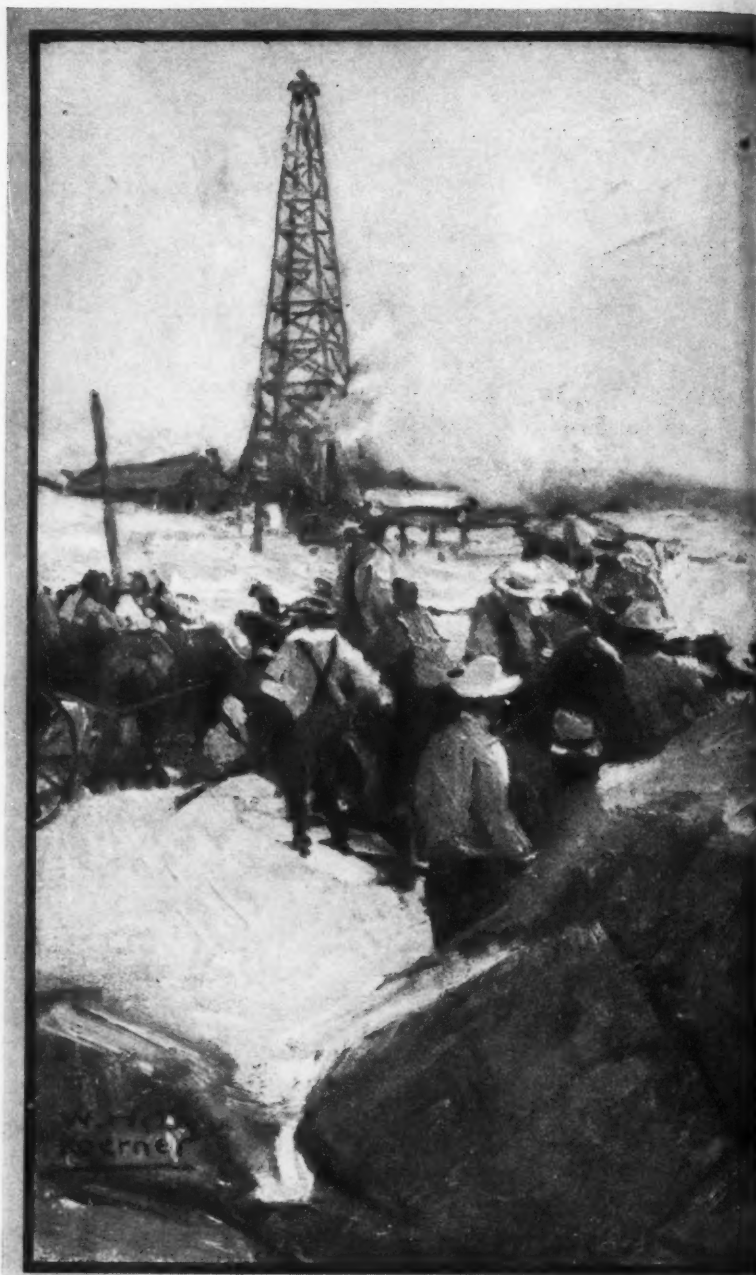
The wildcatter is the idealist of oil, the dreamer—and the pioneer. Where men do not yet know that there is oil, he goes in search of it. His life is mostly disappointment. Yet all fields which show no surface oil or stratification promising to the geologist have been opened up by wildcatters.

Before the wildcatter is an ignis fatuus—the dream of the immense riches which he so seldom gets. Behind him is a trail of dry holes into which he may have poured a half-dozen fortunes which to other men would have been a competence. He is the world's greatest taker of a chance. The gamblers of Monte Carlo are children playing marbles when compared with him. Whatever he may have—present possessions, money in the bank—is nothing to him. He thinks in terms of the millions which he hopes to get. His salvation is that his certainty of ultimate success prevents discouragement.

It told a great deal about the well Rockridge was drilling that there was no other derrick within several miles of it.

Before he had begun drilling on the Pell farm, Rockridge had held one other unsatisfied dream besides that of riches. Women had looked with favor on his eager face and his active figure clad in the always dusty or muddy khaki of the oil-fields. But he had never felt more than a fleeting interest in these women. Then, three months before, he had met the youngest daughter of John Pell—Clarissa. In March, a length of casing, falling from a truck fortuitously at the point where the road passed nearest the Pell house, had broken some small bones in his foot. He had been taken to the house and had remained there, probably unnecessarily, for a week. In April, he had begun to drill the well.

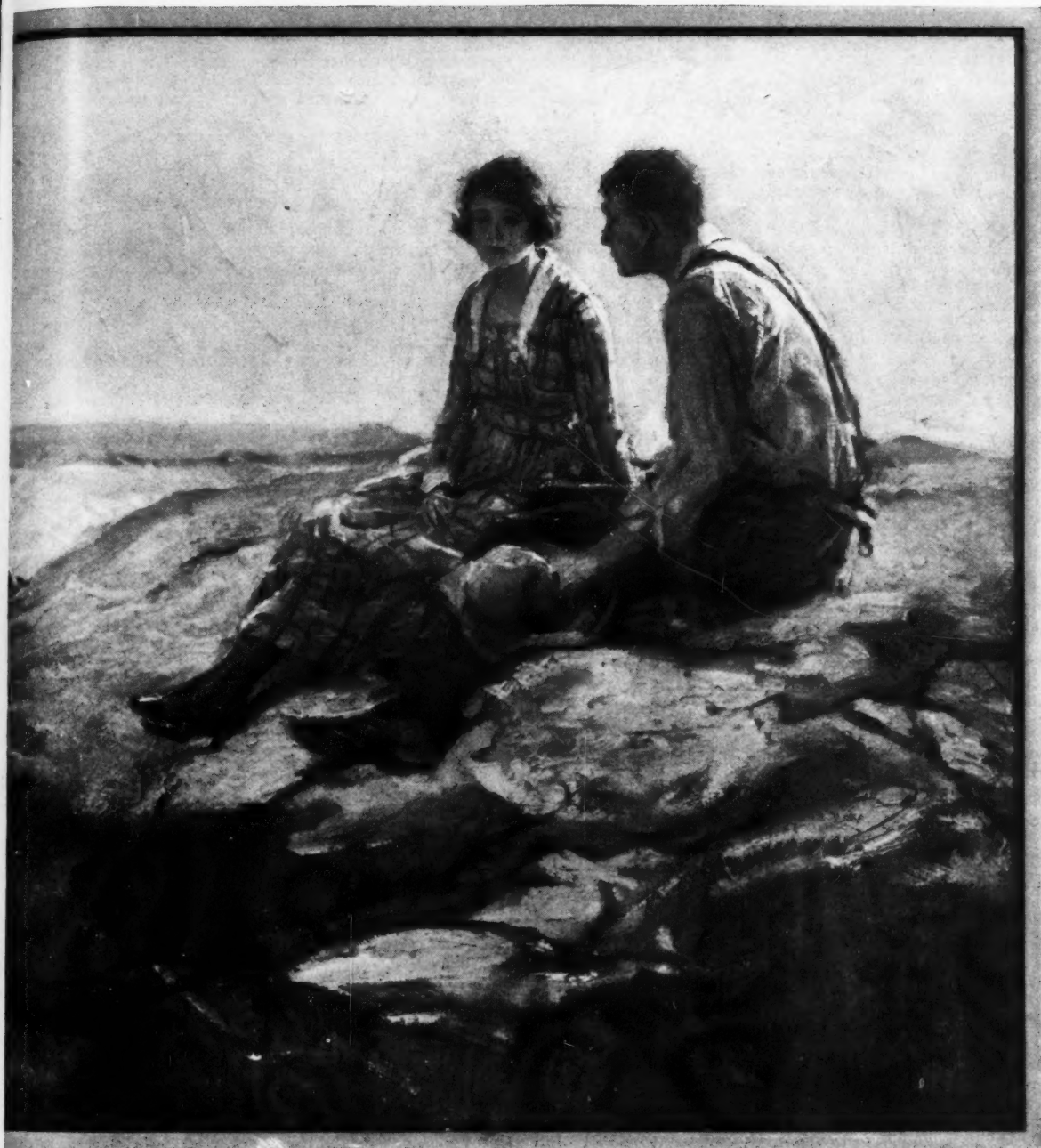
Clarissa sat often on a timber-head close by the well, watching its progress. He had not been able to determine whether she did this more frequently mornings, during his own twelve-hour tour from midnight until noon, or afternoons, during the tour from noon to midnight of "Smoky Joe," the other driller. Still less had he been able to be certain whether her interest was in himself or in the well. One must, however, be keenly interested



"Just now," Rockridge went on, "I'm broke again. It doesn't bother me. Not

in something—either the driller or the well—to sit and watch the drilling of an oil-well. Few things are more monotonous. For twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, with only periodic more interesting interruptions, the walking-beam operated by the engine moves slowly up and down, raising and dropping the "string" of tools whose ton of weight, a half-mile, perhaps, down in the earth, is slowly pounding the rock at the bottom of the well into powder. For the twelve hours of his tour, the driller stands slowly twisting the cable to which the tools are hung, in order that the hole may be kept straight. The periodic interruptions of interest occur when, the mud at the bottom of the hole having accumulated until it interferes with drilling, it becomes necessary to clean it out by "running" the bailer.

These monotonous operations had, however, during the three months, produced a notable change in the Pell family. "Pa" Pell's worn body, shambling behind his skinny team, had straightened. "Ma" Pell's shrunken figure had taken on a strange alertness as she fed the chickens. Arthur, a sad-faced, gangling youth, seemed less like one chained to his inseparable companion—the hoe. And Elise and Helen, thin girls—there was no plump-



that I'm expecting anything of this well; I don't. That makes no difference with what I came back here to say to you"

ness in the Pell family—in worn and not overcleanly gingham dresses, moved with less weariness about the two-room house. They all frequently looked toward the well with eyes that queerly lighted.

The day was the blazing-hot forenoon of northern Texas, which leaves the taste of baked dust within the mouth. The string of tools, swung away from the hole and held by a hook against the derrick, and the swift turning of the sand-reel showed that Rockridge and his helper were running the bailer. Clarissa looked on—a slight figure in clean but unstarched gingham, her chin cupped in her hands. A profusion of soft hair, too red for brown and too brown for auburn, stirred on her temples. Her sweet, slender girl-face was thrust a little forward in her interest.

As the bailer emerged from the hole, in appearance like nothing but thirty feet of stovepipe, Rockridge himself took it from the hands of the tool-dresser and swung it out over the slush-pit. Clarissa leaned a little further forward. For an instant, Rockridge hesitated; then he motioned to the tool-dresser to release the sand-line. The bailer came down upon the dump-board, opening its valve, and there poured out from its lower end a flood of lime and water white as milk.

Clarissa sank back upon her timber-head. Rockridge could hear her low breath of disappointment.

The tool-dresser took the bailer from him and leaned it against the derrick, and was moving to release the string of tools. Rockridge stopped him with a gesture.

"That's all just now," he told the man, inaudibly to Clarissa. "Go over to the bunk-house. I'll be over in a minute."

He did not look at her. He gazed an instant down into the slush-pit, where a black rim round the later drillings showed that, sometime during the progress of the well, they had encountered a slight show of oil. Then he swung himself down from the derrick floor to the ground and followed his helper to the bunk-house. Emerging, ten minutes later, he went toward her. He had washed and brushed himself and combed the hair back smoothly from his forehead.

"We're shut down temporarily," he told her, "waiting for supplies."

She nodded, and made a place for him to sit beside her.

"It's not that I want to talk to you about—" He was flushed, and a pulse was beating in his cheek. "Remember the day I saw you first?"

She was undisturbed.

"The day you hurt your foot?"

"Yes. Did you think I stayed round here longer than there was any need of, getting well?"

She seemed the faintest bit surprised.

"I don't believe that I thought about that."

"I want you to think about it now. I want to tell you how it was. When they were helping me in here, you were standing at the door. I said to the man who was helping me, 'Who's that?' And he said, 'That's one of this man's daughters—John Pell's.' I didn't say anything more to him, but I said something to myself."

She looked at him and flushed, as if with premonition. Her hand rested on the timber-head between them, and he put his own on it and found triumphantly that she did not take hers away.

Suddenly he felt her stiffen. The bunk-house door had opened, and Smoky Joe, followed by the two others, had come out, carrying their baggage.

"Why," Clarissa cried, "they're leaving!"

He nodded.

"Yes; I fixed it to have them picked up at the cross-road to-day and taken into town."

"You've fixed, too, for them to get back?"

He did not answer that.

"Wait," he said. "I'm telling you. I waited round here nursing that hurt foot until I got ashamed of pretending it was so much hurt; and afterward, whenever I was in town, or whenever I was passing by, I watched for you. I never did see you in town. It seemed you and your folks hardly ever went off this farm. And I didn't very often see you when I passed by or stopped here. It got so that I was always looking for you." There was fright in the swift glance she cast up at him, but there was also joy. His heart beat quickly. "So, one day, I stopped up here to see your dad."

"The day you told him you thought that there was oil on the farm?"

"That's the day. It was the only way I could get to know you—don't you see?—and get you to know me. That's why I made the sort of arrangement with him that I did—that I was to do the drilling and get my money back and my profit out of the oil, if there was any." He looked away from her. She waited. "The most I had," he said, "was thirty thousand dollars, and I've gone deeper into the ground on that than any other man round here could; but now I've run it out."

"You've spent it all?" she asked uneasily.

"Not only that. This last while we've been financed on the rig—the derrick and the tools; I sold those standing, but not to be moved till we were through using them—those, and the little jitney I had when I came out here; I sold that, too. I don't want you to put too much importance on the money. I've

Pell stopped by the well to question him. "What 'ave you come back to do?"

spent more on smaller things. The point is it gave a chance for us to know each other. I thought maybe you'd get to care for me." He wet his lips. "What I want to know now is if you do?"

A light was shining in her tear-filled eyes.

"Yes," she whispered, with lips hardly moving.

"Love me?"

"Yes."

"Enough to marry me?"

She looked up at him frankly through her tears.

"Yes—oh, yes!"

"Then that's all right. That's what I said to myself when I first saw you—that I hoped you would." The blood was racing in triumph in his veins. "Don't think about the money. We'll get so blamed much money that no bank can hold it."

She laughed with happiness.

"But, first," she said, "before we get all that, we'll have to get enough to finish up the well."

"This well?" He, too, was laughing. "Why, not this one. This well is finished—gastodos, as they say—played out. I reckon you didn't quite understand what I've been telling you. Drilling out here gave me the chance to be with you. I was willing to spend the money just for that. There's men who have been wasting time laughing at me for drilling in this place. They thought I came out here for oil."

She was staring at him, frightened.

"But we got oil!"

"Oh, that!" he returned good-humoredly. "You could get that much oil drilling most anywhere round here. Oil in commercial quantity is another thing. A man would be a fool that looked for that here."

He felt, suddenly, uneasiness. She had risen, pale, and with startled eyes.

"You mean," she cried, "you never thought you would get oil?"

"Of course not. It's miles off the known pools. The formation here ain't right. It was like I told you—I was drilling a hole I knew would turn out dry because I wanted to be here near you."

She shuddered.

"And they—Smoky Joe and the others—they aren't coming back?"

"No; I paid them off."

"Oh!" she said dully. She stood for a long moment, frozen. "You don't know what you've done—you don't know! Look at this place!"

She stretched out her arms with so bitter a gesture that, in spite of his familiarity with their surroundings, he was forced to look. From the slightly rounded, rocky knoll which he had chosen as the site for the well, his eyes swept a desolation of cactus, mesquit, and chaparral, broken by upjutting crests of limy rock and patches of laboriously plowed land which showed only a few shoots of dusty foliage.

"A man sold my grandfather this land, unseen, pretending that it would grow cotton. It won't grow anything."

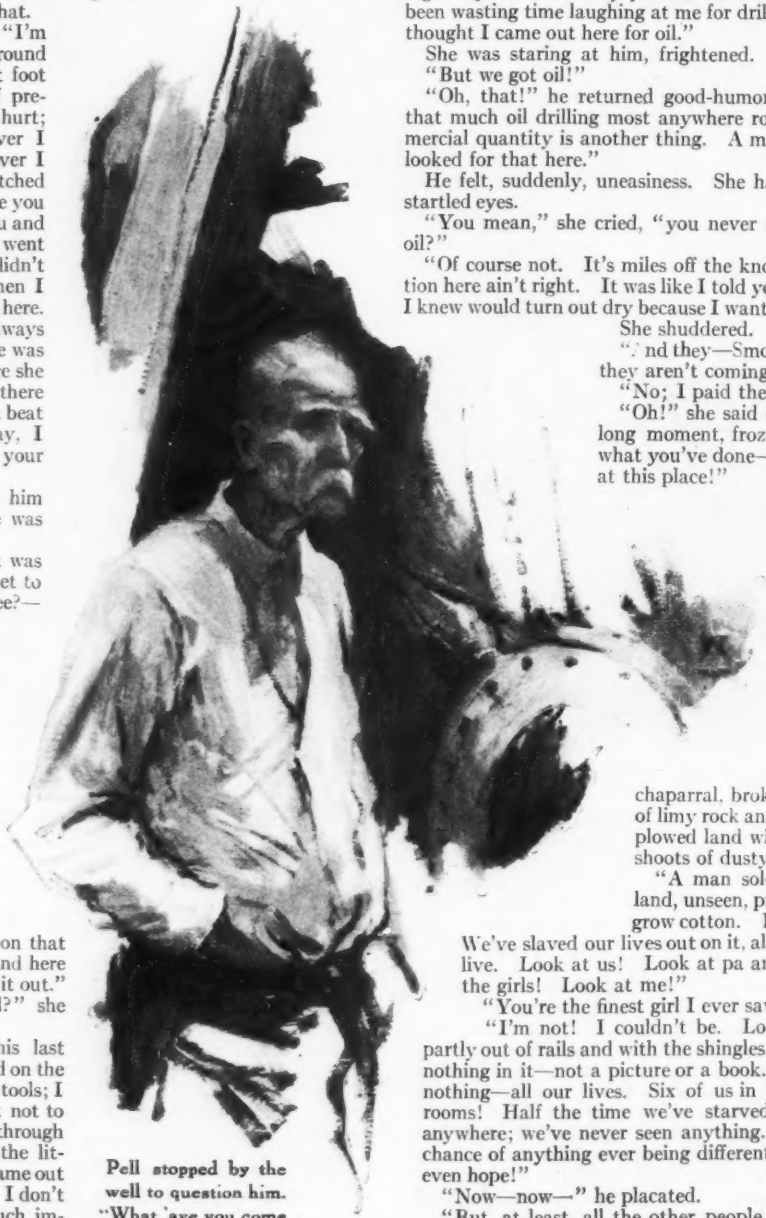
"We've slaved our lives out on it, all my family—merely to live. Look at us! Look at pa and ma, and Arthur and the girls! Look at me!"

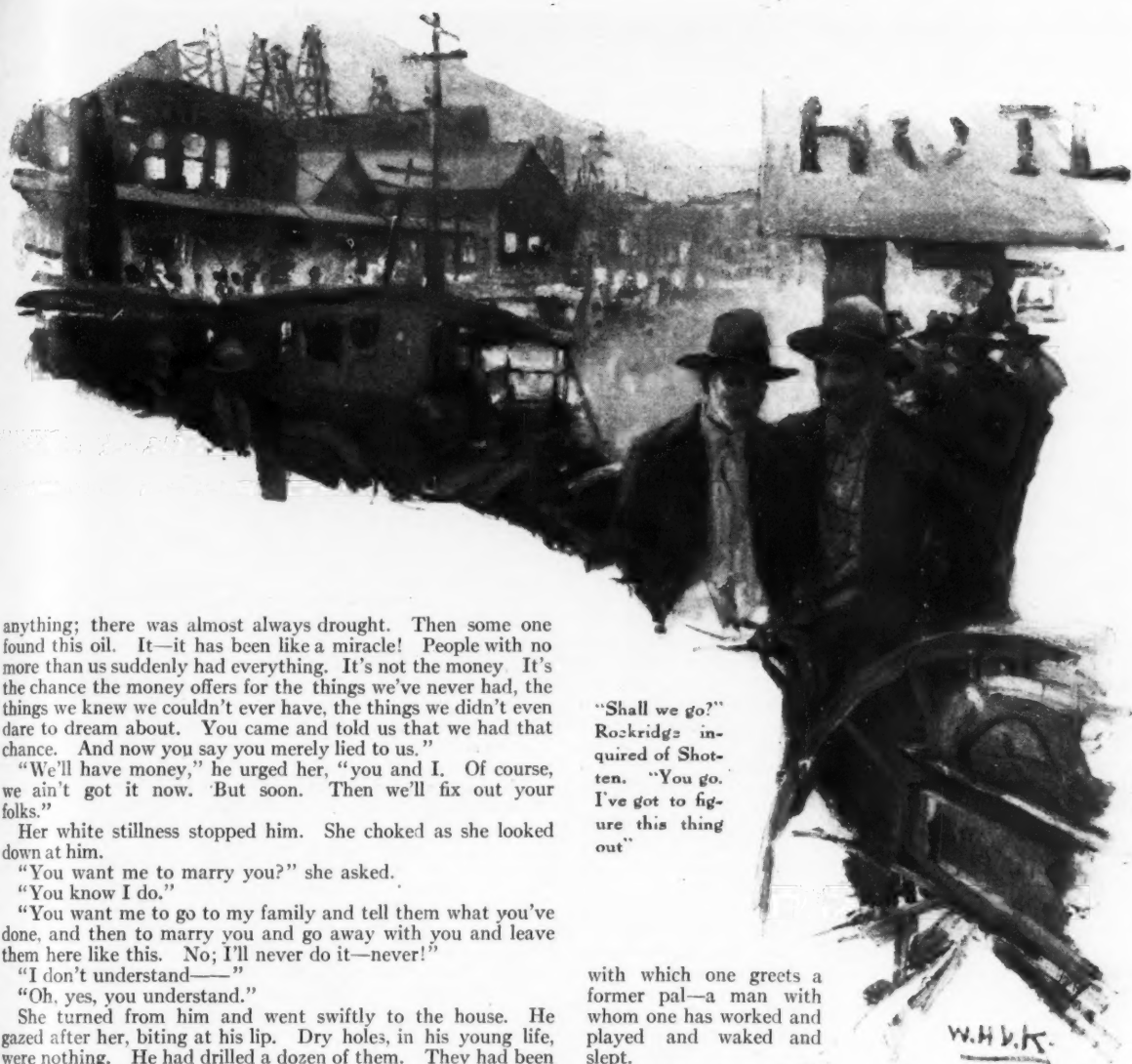
"You're the finest girl I ever saw."

"I'm not! I couldn't be. Look at the house—built partly out of rails and with the shingles most all off it. There's nothing in it—not a picture or a book. We've had nothing—nothing—all our lives. Six of us in two rooms, and such rooms! Half the time we've starved. We've never been anywhere; we've never seen anything. And there wasn't a chance of anything ever being different for us. We couldn't even hope!"

"Now—now—" he placated.

"But, at least, all the other people here, the people that we knew, were no better off than us. Their farms didn't grow





anything; there was almost always drought. Then some one found this oil. It—it has been like a miracle! People with no more than us suddenly had everything. It's not the money. It's the chance the money offers for the things we've never had, the things we knew we couldn't ever have, the things we didn't even dare to dream about. You came and told us that we had that chance. And now you say you merely lied to us."

"We'll have money," he urged her, "you and I. Of course, we ain't got it now. But soon. Then we'll fix out your folks."

Her white stillness stopped him. She choked as she looked down at him.

"You want me to marry you?" she asked.

"You know I do."

"You want me to go to my family and tell them what you've done, and then to marry you and go away with you and leave them here like this. No; I'll never do it—never!"

"I don't understand—"

"Oh, yes, you understand."

She turned from him and went swiftly to the house. He gazed after her, biting at his lip. Dry holes, in his young life, were nothing. He had drilled a dozen of them. They had been disappointments; but after each had risen on tireless wings the hope, amounting to a certainty for him, of better luck next time. It occurred now to him, for the first time, what life must be to people who had nothing to look forward to; and with this came realization of the irrevocableness of her answer.

After a few minutes, he went, with choking breath, into the bunk-house and got his things. It was dusk when, with a lift from a passing motor, he got into Ranger.

At dusk, in Ranger, the auto parties which had made visits to the surrounding oil-fields were returning. The summer Texas dust in the little unpaved town was over everything. It covered a half-inch deep the cars which, on the street-corners, were disgorging dusty men whose eyes shone with the oil-madness. It eddied in and out of the new and uncompleted buildings with which oil has so miraculously replaced the shabby little wooden structures. In the stores, which oil has stocked with goods in profusion and in quality that Ranger never dreamed of, it covered both the stocks and the purchasers. It filled the eyes and noses of the thousands of adventurers drawn by oil from seven quarters of the globe and crowding the telegraph office, stores, and sidewalks. The stir of the oil-crazed, turbulent town, with its lighted doorways, jangling pianos, and painted girls, brought no relief to him.

The man who has put himself in the wrong toward the woman he loves has trouble in finding consolation in anything.

On the porch of the brick hotel, built with profits from the first of all Ranger oil-wells as a farmer in dry Texas might be expected to build a hotel—that is, without a single bath—the hand of a dusty man fell on Rockridge's shoulder.

"Old Georgie Rockridge!" Rockridge heard. "The one man in Texas I've been looking for!"

Rockridge turned. The spurt of happiness shot through him

"Shall we go?"

Rockridge inquired of Shotten. "You go. I've got to figure this thing out"

with which one greets a former pal—a man with whom one has worked and played and waked and slept.

"Good Lord! Cal Shotten!" he exclaimed. "I thought you were down Pecos way."

"I was until I started out to look for you. Some one told me you were at Breckenridge, and I went there for you. Told me there you were here. Drove over here this afternoon, and they said you were drilling on some lease. Expected to look you up out there to-morrow, if I had to go through Texas with a fine-mesh sieve to find you."

"Sounds like you wanted something pretty bad."

"I do. Old-timer, me and you are rich! It's come—the big thing we've always been looking for."

"I don't feel rich, Cal, and you don't look it."

"Not in the clothes, I don't; but look me in the face."

The man's excited look infected Rockridge. Shotten led the way to one of the benches in front of the hotel and explained.

"Five months ago, I took a six-months' option on a two-hundred-and-fifty-acre lease—got it in a trade. It wasn't anything, I thought, and so did the man that gave it to me; no oil for twenty miles around. Hush now! Ten days ago, they brought in a five-thousand-barrel well not a quarter-mile from where this same land lies. One of those quiet deals—not known they were drilling till the well came in. This lease I've got the option on is on the anticline, on the same pool they've tapped, and in a better place than theirs. To use the option and take up the lease will cost us only five thousand, and it's worth twenty to fifty times as much the way it stands. I've got the half of it. You put up the other half—"

Rockridge took from his pocket a five-dollar bill and stretched it between his hands.

"There's my pile, Cal, after paying off my men on the dry hole I've been drilling."

"But you can raise money"

"Not a bit! I've raised the last brown cent I could. Sold the rig and tools and used that money."

"Sold the casing?"

"Nobody'd buy it in the hole, and I can't finance pulling it."

"You've got to get the cash. This isn't risk; it's certainty. I've been up there and looked at it. I could stop the first man that goes past this bench and get the money from him, if he has it. But I'll not do that. When I stood looking at that land, I said to myself: 'This here is for Georgie Rockridge and for me—nobody else. We'll take that lease up just between ourselves; when we've done that, we can raise rhino for the well.' It ain't only for old sake's sake I want you in. I want the things you know. I want the well put in the right place, and I don't want some one there that'll drill a crooked hole and break me before we tap the oil. I'll change that money-talk I made just now. I've got the little car I drove here in; I'll sell it. It ought to bring twelve hundred. I've got other things I'll sell to raise three hundred more. That's my top limit; I can't scrape up more than that. You raise the other thousand—"

"Cal, you don't seem to understand. I'm not only broke; I've gone my top limit now in raising cash. If all northern Texas was selling for a cent, I couldn't raise the cash to buy the dust off your eye-winkers. You've got to take your lease with some one else."

The reply was final, and Shotten sensed it. He sat twisting his fingers and urging inaudible arguments under his breath.

In front of them, the street had taken on its evening phase of life. Ranger had washed its hands and face and brushed its hair and had come out to stand about or walk. Girls in light dresses passed them, arms round one another's waists. Men with megaphones on the street-corners made loud announcement of the evening's entertainments—moving-picture shows and vaudeville; they competed in description of the girls composing the rival companies. A bus drove slowly up and down with a megaphone announcer: "Bus for the Country Club." A motor with three men whirled suddenly round the corner and drew up in front of the hotel.

"Going to the Country Club, Rockridge?"

"Shall we go?" Rockridge inquired of Shotten.

"You go. I've got to figure this thing out."

He left Shotten and got into the car with the others.

The "Country Club," a mile and a half outside of town and well beyond the city limits, bored Rockridge. A hundred cars were parked in front of the unpainted frame structure nestling in the hollow of a wooded hill. In its one chief room, surrounded on three sides by booths in which illegal whisky sold for forty dollars a quart, painted girls in short skirts, with Texas roses in their hair, gyrated to the thin music of a tinny orchestra, with partners in khaki, in oil-spotted town clothes, or the trim garments of the East.

Rockridge had taken a dislike to women. He got up, after a time, from the table where he was seated with his hosts, and excused himself. Crossing the dance-hall to a closed door, he opened it, passed through an antechamber, and entered a room without windows, carpeted with canvas, and filled with men seated or standing about tables.

The game directly in front of him was craps. He stopped to watch it as the dice passed from hand to hand and came finally to him. He had no intention of playing, and moved merely to push the dice over to the man upon his left. Instead, his fingers went to the pocket which held his five-dollar bill.

What he wanted most to-night was to escape from his thoughts and feelings of Clarissa. Somehow, this last five dollars of his money seemed something that held him to those thoughts, and the mood had come to him to get rid of it. He would walk out then, "cleaned," into the night, and forget. He flicked the bill out onto the green cloth. The gray-skinned game-keeper stirred his fishlike eyes, snatched up the bill without comment on the smallness of the stake, and replaced it with five silver dollars, the currency of all Texas public gambling except stud-poker. Rockridge rolled the dice out upon the cloth. They "came" a five and deuce, and the game-keeper set five other silver dollars on the first. Rockridge did not touch them. Once more, and then again, again, again, and still again, the pile was doubled. A smile of dry amusement twisted Rockridge's face; it was not, it appeared, easy to lose his five dollars. Eight stacks, each twenty dollars high, were now upon the table, and suddenly he developed caution. He still meant to lose his money, but craps was not his game, and there was enough now to lose at some game which he would enjoy. He set the stacked silver out in front of the game-keeper and received, in exchange, four bills—three fifties and a ten. Putting them in his pocket, he crossed

the room to where a group of seated men were bent over a round table.

The game was stud-poker. Rockridge played carelessly, intent only on getting as much fun as possible out of losing his money. He noted with amusement, after a half-hour's play, that the money in front of him had increased to nearly six hundred dollars. Suddenly this fact took on significance for him; externally calm, his pulse beat swiftly. If his pile were to rise to a thousand dollars, he could go in with Shotten and take up the lease! It was not, he realized, a thousand dollars he was playing for; it was the hundred thousands, perhaps millions, represented by the lucky option which Shotten held. His throat grew dry in his excitement, and he played carefully now. Instead of winning, however, he began to lose.

When the bills in front of him had melted to less than a hundred dollars, his excitement changed to mocking amusement at himself. He had the feeling of being in the grip of an ironic fate. As often as he tried to lose his money, he won; but when, excited by this increase of his riches, he tried to win, he lost. These alternations of hope and despair were maddening to him. He no longer found any pleasure in the game. He had a sense of a sarcastic destiny holding out to him the millions of Shotten's lease, only to snatch them back and laugh at him.

He would not, he was determined, sit here all night merely to end with a useless hundred or two in hand. Since the evening had proved incontrovertibly that when he tried to win he lost, and when he tried to lose he won, he would make one determined effort to lose his money to the last bill and see what happened. The card face down in front of him was a jack—propitious for his purpose, for jacks had been unlucky for him all night. The second and third cards which fell face up beside it were a deuce and five. He smiled at the utter worthlessness of the hand—no two alike; then, with the internal sarcastic exhilaration of one who has thrown reason to the wind, he raised the bets of the other players. His play gave them an instant of surprise. It was plain from his cards that he was wholly negligible. The fourth card dealt to Rockridge was a jack; he laughed to himself to think how fate was playing with him. The last card was a jack. A cold sweat broke out suddenly upon him. Three jacks! With what, through a mad freak of fortune, had become probably the best hand, it was no longer a question with him of losing by the cards. But he had now only a few bills left in front of him. Had he enough to call their bets?

He regretted now his mad betting at the beginning of the hand. What a fool he'd been! The man across from him, who had two queens showing, studied the hands and bet. Rockridge put in an equal amount of money and was left with but one five-dollar bill. The only other player left had two eights showing, and Rockridge's fate now depended upon him. If the man's hidden card was also an eight and he raised, Rockridge could not make a further call and would have to drop out, possessing only his original five dollars—an irony of luck! He had hope, because the man throughout had shown himself to be a cowardly player.

Rockridge's hands and feet were cold; he felt the blood beating madly in his temples. The player could not suspect him of three jacks; it was almost certain his play would be to raise. In his heart, Rockridge was crying at the man: "You know you're a coward—a quitter! You think he's got three queens. You don't dare to do more than call!"

The man with the eights moved with maddening deliberation. He counted off the bills to make a raise, and sat fingering them. Suddenly, with a weak sigh, he let them drop back upon the pile in front of him and merely called the bet. Rockridge set his teeth in order not to echo that sigh in his relief. As he showed his third jack, which beat the other's three eights and the aces and queens across from him, he felt the chill sweat upon his body suddenly grow warm. He knew, by the extent of his own betting, the amount of money in the middle of the table. He swept it to him with his arms. There was one thousand and eighty dollars! He wadded the bills together, crushing them into his pockets.

Anxiety seized him as he remembered how definite had been his discouragement of Shotten. He had told him bluntly to get some one else. Perhaps Shotten already had done that. Or would Shotten, now that he had got the thousand, see fit to make a raise in his demand? Filled with dread that the fortune which had been offered might escape him, he sprang up, left the room, and hurried back to Ranger.

On the second morning after his night at the Country Club, when Rockridge, with Smoky Joe and two helpers on a truck, arrived at the Pell farm, he was impressed by the change in the



Clarissa sat often on a timber-head close by the well, watching its progress

appearance of the Pell family, by the sodden depression of the weary, drooping figures in their disappointment. They watched the arrival of the truck without making inquiry. Later, however, "pa" Pell, shambling toward the shed which served as a stable, stopped by the well to question him.

"What 'ave you come back to do?"

"We're going to pull the casing," Rockridge replied to him. "I can get some money for it that I need."

The old man returned to the house and evidently told this to the women. No other member of the family, in their estrangement from him, came near the well. It hurt him to catch, at times, glimpses of Clarissa as she came and went about the house and porch.

Standing on the derrick floor and looking down into the well, Rockridge could see the tops of the five "strings" of steel pipe, one within the other—the casing—which had been put in during the drilling of the well to prevent caving and to shut out water which would have made drilling impossible. The outer casing, large enough for a man to have slipped through, descended only a little distance; the innermost one, but little over six inches in diameter, went down more than half a mile into the earth.

Rockridge's experience showed him the improbability of being able to draw out the whole of the inner casing, since it had been in position so long as to be firmly fixed in the hole; but the marvel of the oil-fields is the seeming miracles which men can

accomplish in these small holes and far below them in the earth, and the amazing ingenuity of the tools with which these things are done.

A casing-cutter was sent down, and the steel pipe was cut through a little below the point where the slight showing of oil had been encountered. When the full pull of the engine was exerted on the casing's upper part, the half-mile of pipe lifted a few inches, leaving the severed portion in the hole; but the shivering of the derrick warned Rockridge that, if he persisted, the crown-block of the derrick would be pulled down upon their heads. To loosen the casing, a "squib" of nitroglycerin in a tin tube was lowered into the well and fired. The casing then rose more easily from the hole, and each successive joint of it, as it appeared, was unscrewed and set aside.

Rockridge noted, with irritation, the successive arrival of several visitors at the house. He was proceeding doggedly, without paying attention to these arrivals, when he saw Clarissa coming quickly down the pathway to him. She gazed doubtfully at the piled lengths of casing and at the load which had been taken from the truck, and hesitated breathlessly. She seemed pale and worn, but her eyes were eager.

"They say you aren't just pulling the casing," she declared.

He was ashamed of the sullenness of his answer.

"I suppose they know what they're talking about."

Her eyes flashed at him.

*Can the sort of
woman who
can be stolen
from one man
be stolen again?
Does it become
a habit?*

Grand Larceny

By Albert Payson Terhune

Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy

BOTH men loved her. She was the sort of woman men worship and hate at the same time—an adorable, irresponsible, wonderful, irritating witch-girl who had refused to grow up. To marry her—or her type—was bound to be the surest form of happiness, suicide. Wherefore, men strove with all their souls to win her for a wife. John Anixter married her. Barry Clive met her afterward. Here is the story: Anixter had brains, plus rocklike steadiness. He was a corporation lawyer, and rich. Clive had brains, plus a surfeit of imagination. He was an architect.

Anixter did not need imagination to marry Kathleen Vaughn. He was thirty-two and she was twenty-one. She had spent the bulk of her late girlhood at the side of her hopelessly bedridden mother. And when her mother died, John Anixter was tremendously kind about all sorts of bothersome business details. He was executor of the estate, and he had known Kathleen from her childhood.

She had seen pitifully few men. She felt lonely and lost without the mother who had monopolized all her time and her first blazing glory of youth. It seemed like sailing into a safe haven to accept John's bluntly eager proposal. So the two were married. And, for a time, they were pleasantly and unthrilledly happy.

Anixter was mildly flattered that his lovely young wife should be so well liked. And her pleasure in the frank attentions of other men was gratifying to him. It was good that she should be able to make up, in innocent good times, for her fun-starved girlhood. And he rejoiced to see how she blossomed forth under the sunshine of popularity, and how her irresponsible, childish witchery drew men dazedly to her. He had the same quiet faith in her honor as in his own.

All this, until he came home a day early from a business trip to Cleveland and walked into his own library to find Kathleen standing there encircled by Barry Clive's arms.

Neither of the lovers heard the approach of the husband across the soft hallway rugs. Neither of them saw him as he halted sharply in the doorway.

That was how they came to miss the swift successive play of emotions athwart Anixter's wontedly heavy face. Blank incredulity lent his features a cast of imbecile foolishness. This was supplanted by a look of heart-broken amaze, such as a loving child might wear if a fist-blow instead of a kiss were planted upon its upturned lips.

Then the pallid face slowly went brick-red and then purple. The lips drew back in a wolfish snarl from the eye-teeth. The calm eyes flashed murder.

*She was the
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John Anixter's imagination was at last beginning to be born. And its birth-pangs ravaged him like the breath of hell.

Presently—even as his swelling muscles urged him to leap forward and commit in the flesh the murder he was already committing in his heart—his lifelong steadiness and philosophy came to the rescue of sanity.

He checked himself by an effort that left him deathly weak. And the glint of homicide ebbed from his eyes. His distorted visage was set in a mask. And, in his keen brain, the ever-present business acumen reasserted itself. Subconsciously, he was beginning already to salvage from the wreck all that could be salvaged. He was planning his campaign.

Thus it was that, when Kathleen chanced to turn her head and caught a glimpse of her injured husband, she saw a visage as emotionless as a death-mask's.

With a gasp of terror, she tore free from Clive's embrace and spun round to face the man she had betrayed. Barry saw him at the same time. And, for the space of some seconds, the trio stood wordless and without motion.

Kathleen's nerves gave way first under the strain of silence.

"Well?" she demanded.

Into the monosyllable she managed to throw much plucky defiance. Cornered, she was not cringing but fighting. Clive, in the midst of his own utter perturbation, noted her accent of



courage, and he gave her high credit for it. Anixter, more versed in her ways, read beneath the defiance a stifled subnote of hard-held terror.

Of the three, it was Barry Clive who suffered most excruciatingly. His potent imagination, just then, was not a gift but a curse. It was fairly shouting to him the myriad probable consequences of this discovery.

The chance of death to himself troubled him least of all. He had plenty of courage, or, at least, as near an approach to courage as the lover can hope to have in the presence of the husband.

He loved Kathleen. He had not merely been amusing himself with her. She was the supreme love of his life. For her sake, and for love of her, he stood ready to pay this bill—whatever the bill might be. To pay it, if need be, in shame or in death. Yet he turned cold at the pictures his rioting imagination had begun to paint.

"Well?" demanded Kathleen again, as Anixter made no reply to her shrill challenge. "You've trapped us at last, eh? You said you were coming home tomorrow. And, by a brilliant bit of detective work, you crept in a day early. I hope you are content."

Her light voice had grown harsh and loud; and she was stirred by the impotent rage that sometimes makes a snared bird peck insanely at its captor's fingers. Anixter's heavy tones were lifelessly matter-of-fact as he made answer.

"No; I haven't 'trapped' you. I never suspected you. And if I had, I don't think I'd have tried to trap you. I think I'd have tried not to find out. It hurts less to suspect than to know. I came back today because we wound up the deal a day earlier than we expected to. I didn't wire you, because I thought it'd maybe be a nice surprise to see me back so soon. That's why I came in so quietly just now. I wasn't trying to trap you—"

"Well, now that you *have* trapped us," broke in the woman, still spurred on by that same illogical anger, and determining not to yield to the awful terror which underlay it, "what are you going to do about it?"

"Do about it?" he repeated dully.

"Yes!" she flared. "If you expect me to cringe and weep and play the Magdalen, you're mistaken. I'm not going to whine for mercy. I don't want your mercy. Understand that I love Barry Clive. And I'm willing to take the consequences of loving him. I don't love you. I never loved you. Now that real love—perfect love—has come to me, I—"

"Perfect love!" echoed John, in the maddeningly patient tone of one who corrects the error of an infant. "We read in the Book that 'perfect love casteth out fear.' And you're fairly *sick* with fear, Kathleen. Sick and shaking with it—under all your poor, pitiful bluff. That doesn't seem to me much like 'perfect love.' But perhaps you know best. How about *you*, Clive?"

"I love her," said Barry simply, albeit he steadied his voice with an effort. "I love her. And I'm ready to pay. I—"

"To pay?" queried John stolidly. "So is every other thief—when he is caught. They are generally only too willing to pay—to pay anything at all, so long as they can get free. For you *are* a thief, Clive. I suppose you know that. No; don't glare melodramatically and tighten your fists, man! That's pure fake. As things stand now, you're in no position to resent anything, and you know it. A lover has no standing against a husband. He's helpless. So I tell you, once more, you are a thief. And a wife-thief is a lot lower down on the scale than a jewel-thief or any other kind of thief. But all that is beside the point. I think you just asked me, Kathleen, what I was going to do about it."

She nodded, staring in astonishment at this man she had thought she knew so well. Anixter went on:

"You both of you seem braced for some highly spectacular scene of violence. I don't know why. Because my wife has forgotten all that is best in her womanhood, is that any reason why I should forget what is due to my manhood? Let's talk this over sanely. If I set you free without any scandal—as I am going to do in any case—do you want to marry him? Tell the truth."

"Yes!" she declared fiercely. "Yes! And, as for telling the truth, I always tell the truth. You might have spared me that slur."

"Yes?" he asked. "When you have kissed me—with Clive's

kisses still on your mouth—I suppose that was the truth, too. But let that go. Clive, do you want to marry her?"

"Yes," returned Clive fervently. "And if she will do me the honor—"

"I think perhaps we can leave the word 'honor' out of this chat," suggested John pleasantly. "But, anyway, we've arrived at a conclusion. You both are anxious to marry each other. Good! That's all we needed to settle. To-morrow, I'll put the



matter in Veaden & Veaden's hands. They'll supply a professional corespondent. And you can get a divorce from me on statutory grounds. That will leave you with clean hands. Veaden & Veaden will rush the case through. There'll be no scandal and no sort of unpleasantness. Is that satisfactory?"

He glanced in civil questioning from one to the other. Both his hearers had the oddly mingled sensation of relief and anger that might beset one who finds that the sinister whirl of a rattlesnake close to his ear is really the buzz of a locust.

"That is all, I think," continued John, taking their assent for granted. "The rest is up to you two. Of course, it is no business of mine what either of you chooses to do with the balance of your lives, or that my wife is due to learn that, while all men are different, all husbands are alike. Perhaps it's a rather impertinent platitude to remind you both that a man who will steal one man's wife will steal another's. Also that a woman who can be stolen from her first husband can be stolen just as easily from her second. Perhaps easier. For these things get to be a habit. A woman who is stealable from one man is stealable from another. I wonder who will be the first to steal Kathleen from *you*,

Clive. I have been robbed of my wife. But I have been robbed of her only once. I can never be robbed of her again. I am luckier than you. For you can be robbed of her a hundred times. Grand larceny is never on the free list. I—perhaps, after all, I am not really the loser in this triangle game you two have forced on me. I think that is all."

He turned his back on them, without waiting for a reply, and hurried out of the room. He sought his study and locked him-

down, she and Barry Clive were married. And they set out for a golden honeymoon in California.

Clive was gloriously happy. Yet, as the golden days dreamed on under the magic California skies, he grew aware of rifts in his shimmering fabric of bliss. Kathleen was as ever the ardent and glowing and wittingly elusive sweetheart who had first won his worship. But, against his will, and with a queer feeling of disloyalty, Clive found himself dwelling on fragments of that priggish farewell speech John Anixter had made them:

"A woman who is stealable from one man is stealable from another. I wonder who'll be the first to steal Kathleen from *you*. I can never be robbed of her again. You can be robbed of her a hundred times. Perhaps I'm not really the loser."

The swine!

To insinuate that Kathleen, the divinely elfin, could look at another man—could think, for one instant, of anyone but Clive! Why, Anixter was a fool—a born fool! Yet—

And again Barry Clive's imagination slipped the bridle and ran loose. He had a hard time cornering and subduing it. All the while, he was hounded by a wretched knowledge that it was certain to break loose again.

The first days of the honeymoon were spent in seclusion at a Carmel bungalow that a writer friend of Clive's had put at the couple's disposal. There, amid the forest hills, with the fire-blue Pacific at their feet, the two lived like gods of old.

But, soon, they drifted southward. And complete seclusion ended. They spent a week at Santa Barbara. At the hotel there, they fell in with half a dozen Eastern acquaintances. Clive noted jealously that Kathleen seemed to welcome this jolly intrusion on their sweet solitude.

At a Montecito dance, the second evening of their Santa Barbara stay, Kathleen "sat out" twice with men who had been casual admirers of hers in the Anixter days. Not twice with the same man; but twice with different men. On the bit of balcony overlooking the moonlit sea at that.

Barry did not at all like the tender solicitude shown by one of the men in replacing round her shoulders the film of silken scarf that had fallen to the floor. And if, in doing so, he really did lay his hand on her arm—and Clive was well-nigh cer-

tain of it—Kathleen did not draw away, or rebuke by word or action the vulgar familiarity.

During the drive back to the hotel that night, Kathleen prattled merrily of the evening's fun. She was in buoyant spirits. But Barry Clive said not a word. Not until they were in their own rooms did he speak. Then, breaking roughly in upon her light-hearted chatter, he said:

"Listen here, little girl: There's something I've got to say to you. I—I hate to say it, but it's got to be said—for both our



"Well?" demanded Kathleen again, as Anixter made no reply to her shrill challenge. "You've trapped us at last, eh? You said you were coming home to-morrow. And, by a brilliant piece of detective work, you crept in a day early. I hope you are content"

self in. Nor did he emerge from that sanctuary for many hours. He had used up all his present stock of coolness and philosophy, and once more he was perilously close to a starkly murderous, primal male. It was well for him to be alone—and behind a locked door.

Six months later, Mrs. John Anixter received her full decree of divorce from the middle-aged husband she had sued on grounds of flagrant infidelity. Three days after the decree was handed

sakes. I ought to have said it before we were married. But it isn't too late now. At least, I hope it isn't."

She was staring up at the scowling man in frank wonder. It was the first time this worshiping bridegroom of hers had dropped his lovely tone.

"Why, Barry!" she exclaimed. "What on earth is the matter?"

"I won you away from one man," he said, his words coming in a rush, "and I don't propose to have another man win you away from me. I know you mighty well. I know what your temptations are. I've reason to know. Anixter said, 'A woman who is stealable from one man is stealable from another.' He lied. You're not going to be stolen from me. Because—"

"Barry!"

"Because," he raged on, "I know from experience how you behave—how you look—how you speak when you're beginning to care for a man. And the moment I see any of those symptoms tried on some one else, there's going to be trouble—more kinds of trouble than I like to speak of. I warn you, I won you for myself—not to pass you on to somebody newer. I know how easy you are to steal. But you're not 'stealable' from me. Understand that, now and always!"

In his fierce earnestness, he had caught her by the shoulder. And his voice had a growl in it. The woman wrenched herself free.

"Are you drunk, Barry?" she cried, furious and bewildered. "What do you mean by—"

"I mean just what I've said," he retorted. "No more. Certainly no less. Keep it in mind. For it isn't pleasant for me to have to say it again."

Thus began the quarrel—the quarrel which raged on like a forest-fire until it was drenched out in a sluice of tears. Whereat, manlike, Clive sued for pardon. And pardon was granted—on Kathleen's own terms. Outwardly, the new-wed couple was reconciled. But each knew the other could not possibly have forgotten what had been said.

Kathleen felt she was not trusted and that she was watched. This rankled the more keenly in her sensitive soul, since the man had predicated his distrust on the once-divine fact that she had given up everything for love of him. She alternated between punishing him by effusive friendliness to other men and shaming him by bursts of devotion toward himself—bursts of devotion so demonstrative that they struck him as suspicious.

Barry Clive's life descended with much swiftness into a recurrent hell. His imagination had lost the bridle entirely, and would no longer be controlled. The foul idea, bred of Anixter's speech, was beginning to obsess him. He loved Kathleen—loved her crazily. But this very love for her added fuel to his jealousy.

"Grand larceny is never on the free list!"

And he raged as he realized how Anixter's senseless maxim was proving itself.

Matters were moving steadily toward a new outbreak when business called Clive back to the East to superintend the building of a court-house he had designed in a city a few miles from New York. He rejoiced at the prospect of taking his beautiful wife away from the mischief-breeding indolence of their California life. And in the bustle and interest of settling in their New York home, his fears went to sleep.

But soon these fears were awake and clamant again. His presence was needed twice or thrice a week, just now, at the site of the new court-house he had planned. And, perforce, he must thus spend whole days out of town, away from his adored wife.

Always he hurried home as fast as business would let him. But, all the while he was away, he wondered how Kathleen was putting in her time. She had days and days to herself. She could not possibly be staying at home—alone, but for the servants—during these intervals. Where was she, and with whom? Or, if she were at home, who were her guests? Clive swore venomously to himself as, into his memory, for the millionth time, came John Anixter's nasty conjecture: "I wonder who will be the first to steal Kathleen from you?"

Once—loathing himself for doing such a thing—he told Kathleen he would not be back in town until midnight. Then, unheralded, he came home at three in the afternoon.

Kathleen was out. Her maid said she had left word she would not be in for dinner.

Clive spent the rest of the hideous day in searching the city, or such portions of it as Kathleen had no right to be in. He peered at the registers of more than one questionable hotel. He popped in and out of half a dozen lovers'-roost tea-rooms. He glanced into the private and semiprivate dining-rooms of restau-

rants. He even found flimsy pretexts to call at the bachelor rooms of several men he and Kathleen knew. Earlier, he had telephoned the offices of three others to see if they were taking the afternoon off. His tyrant imagination was picturing, every instant, terrible things. He remembered Kathleen's first clandestine visit to his own rooms. And he could have howled aloud in rabid fury at what the memory evoked.

At ten o'clock, he went home. He was worn out and in anguish. At half-past ten, Kathleen came back. He saw a taxi draw up at the curb. And he dashed out—less to escort his wife into the house than to make sure no man was lurking in the dark recesses of the cab. But he was too late. The vehicle set off down the street before he could come close enough to inspect it. And this simple fact piled new fuel on his flaming misery. It might imply any of fifty things.

"Why, hello, Barry!" his wife hailed the distraught man. "I thought you weren't going to be home till midnight. So I went out to Montclair and spent the day with aunt Sibyl. I thought I'd be home long before you were. What's the matter? You're so white and—and queer."

Barry mumbled something about having gotten home earlier than he had expected. And he longed for the courage—or the unsportsmanliness—to call his wife's aunt on the telephone and learn from her whether or not Kathleen had really been visiting her.

Meanwhile, the couple were facing each other in the lighted doorway of their home. And, all at once, Clive noticed that Kathleen's eyes were still fixed on his. He realized that his face, just then, must be easily readable.

The whimsical—or masklike—smile died on Kathleen's soft lips. Without another word, she turned away from him and went up-stairs to her own room. Thus might offended innocence punish vile suspicion. Thus, too, might guilt seek to dodge detection. Barry took a hesitant step after her. Then he turned aside and walked ploddingly into the library.

He slumped into a chair by the dying fire and blinked with unseeing eyes at the coals. His mind and his imagination were running a neck-and-neck race. The climax had come. For, now he knew he had stood all he could stand. He had come to the end.

"A woman who is stealable from one man is stealable from another!"

The fire died down to glum iron-grayness. A chill crept through the dead-still room. Clive got up with something like a groan. He crossed to his desk and took out writing-materials. Then, after scribbling a word or two, he stopped, as if for a loss what to say. Again he bent to the paper. And soon his pen was scratching away without pause. He wrote:

DEAR ANIXTER:

You were right. "Grand larceny is never on the free list." You said that a woman who could be stolen from her first husband could be stolen still easier from her second, because that sort of thing gets to be a habit. But of all the true things you said, the truest was when you told me you couldn't be robbed of her love more than once, but that I could be robbed of it a hundred times.

That was true. Because not a hundred but a thousand times I've suspected her. And if each time I've been wrong, yet each time I may have been right. That is what makes it too big a load for me to go on carrying. And I've come to the end of the road. I can't keep this up.

I took her from you. There is nothing about me to hold the love of any woman exclusively and forever. I'm rather vain. But I'm not vain enough to think that. If I could take her from you, it's a certainty some one, soon or late, can take her from me. That is what's making my life hell.

There are some women—plenty of them—who are "one-man women." Women who love one man, and him alone, and who are true to him as long as they both live. Such women as God made. And they are true to even the least attractive husbands. True—till death.

Kathleen isn't such a woman. We've proved that—you and I. She is of the kind that is "stealable." I stole her from you. Another man will steal her from me—a hundred other men, for all I know. It may have happened already—again and again. Or it may not. I don't know. And I don't want to know. I don't dare to know. All I know is that a little more of this will send me to a sanatorium or to my pistol. If I'm writing like a fool, it's because I *am* a fool.

Here is the object of this letter:

You loved her. She says you told her once she was the only woman you had ever been able to love or ever could learn to love. You loved her enough to let her go scot-free. You loved her enough to stay single for her sake since then.

For God's sake, take her back!

It can be arranged. I know it can. The "first man" always has a tremendous hold on any woman. If I give her up—if she sees you still want her, and that you are willing to take her back—if she knows it is her only chance of happiness and of social standing, I honestly believe she can be made to consent. It is worth a try, anyway.

Won't you think it over carefully and let me know?



He had caught her by the shoulder. The woman wrenched herself free. "Are you drunk, Barry?" she cried, furious and bewildered. "What do you mean by—"

If you think this is the letter of a lunatic, you're not far wrong. But it is the only solution I can figure out. I can't stand this any longer. I'm waiting for your answer.

While the stark impulse still gripped him, Barry Clive took his amazing letter out and posted it. Afterward, somehow, he felt happier—or less dazedly wretched—than he had felt for weeks.

Next morning, he went away, long before Kathleen was awake, and took an early train for the court-house town. It was late that night when he returned. Kathleen was not down-stairs to greet him. Whether she had gone to bed or was out, he did not trouble to conjecture.

On the hall table lay a small sheaf of mail for him. Sorting

it idly, he came upon a thick letter, addressed in John Anixter's prim hand.

Barry dropped the rest of the mail on the table and hurried into the library with Anixter's missive. The thickness of the letter gave promise of much length. And a man who writes a lengthy answer to such a proposition is prone to be a man open to argument or persuasion. Barry took heart of the omen.

Closing the door behind him, he switched on a reading-light, settled down in a chair and tore open the envelop. He drew out—his own letter.

As he stared, dumfounded, at it, he saw that a line or so had been written in ink in the blank space at the top of the first page. And, in John Anixter's precise chirography, Clive read:

Grand Larceny

I refuse to start a new account. I have paid my bill. I have paid it in full. Why should I pay yours?
J. A.

Barry crumpled the letter convulsively. A groan of keen anguish broke from his twisted lips.

"Bad news?" asked a coolly level voice from the doorway.

He looked up, startled. On the threshold, Kathleen stood. She was glancing inquiringly from the crushed sheets of paper to the man's sick face.

Subconsciously, Barry noted that she was still in afternoon dress and wore a hat. Evidently she had come home during the last few minutes, unheard by him in his stark absorption. And again the never-sleeping imp of suspicion racked him.

"Been spending the day at your aunt's again, out in Montclair?" he asked, in heavy sarcasm.

"Yes," she answered, unheeding or ignoring the inflection of his query. "She asked me, when I was there yesterday, if I wouldn't run out again this afternoon, because her bridge club was to meet at her house. It was frightfully poky. Then she persuaded me to stay to dinner, and we all got to playing bridge again, and I missed the ten-o'clock train, and — But" — glancing again at the letter her husband was mechanically smoothing out on his knee — "I asked if you'd had bad news. You looked so — so —"

Her voice trailed off, as her eyes met his.

"Yes," he said shortly; "I've had bad news. The worst news I could have had."

With a quick little crooning sound of sympathy, she hurried toward him. Before she could reach his side, Barry stepped forward to meet her. He thrust the letter into her hand.

Kathleen, rebuffed by his sharp gesture, stared at him in surprise, halting in her sympathetic advance. Her glance fell on the superscription of the letter. Blankly she looked at it. Then, crossing to the desk-lamp, she began to read. Barry Clive stood watching her. And as he watched, the hot wrath died within him.

She was so dainty, so alluring, so altogether adorable! And her mystic charm stretched out invisible arms to him. Athrill, he strode up to her. As he did so, she laid down the letter and its cynical scrawl of reply.

She did not draw back from the ardently advancing man. Yet, at the face she raised to his, his eager step faltered. He stood irresolute, confused — cursing himself for the lunatic brute impulse which had made him show her what he had written and what the other man had answered. He sought to say something of the sort. But she forestalled him.

Very quietly she spoke, the gaiety and the spritlike witchery dead in her voice. "Please don't speak to me just yet," she said. "This — this calls for some thinking — for more thinking than I have ever bothered to do. It hits me between the eyes, you know. Give me a minute or two."

She went to the far end of the room, beyond the radius of the narrow light-glow, and stood beside the window, looking out. Long she stood there, the man eying her in growing sickness of heart and self-shame,

and in yearning. Once he took a hesitant step toward her. But, without turning round, she divined his move. And, with a little imperative gesture, she checked it.

Clive did not know how long the wretched silence brooded over the dimly-lighted room. But, at last, Kathleen spoke — still in that muted, oddly impersonal tone.

"Barry," she said, "I have done more growing in these past few minutes than in all my life. When people grow up, their ideas change. And I never troubled to grow up till now. I've been over this letter, syllable by syllable, in my mind. And every syllable was a growing pain. It is not pleasant to grow up."

"Kathleen," he pleaded, vehement in his remorse, "I was a cur to show you that letter! I was a cur to write it! I —"

"No," she denied evenly, as she turned and came toward him. "You were right. And so was John Anixter in what he wrote here. You were both right — in so far as any two men can be who try to settle the future of a woman. And that means you were both wrong."

"Yes!" he agreed eagerly, craven in his yearning for peace.

"All wrong! I see that now. I —"

"No; you don't, Barry," she contradicted gently. "You don't see it at all. But I must make you see it. That's why I took so long to think just now. I had to make sure there was

no mistake. And there isn't. I —"

"But I don't understand. How —"

"No," she said; "you wouldn't understand. All you understand is that you found life unbearable with me, and tried to shift the burden to another man. He was wise enough to refuse to take it. That is all you understand. And, because you still have a shred of the infatuation that made you fall in love with me, you're repenting that you let me read this. To-night you're sorry. To-morrow you'd do it all over again. Because you're a man. That's all you understand, Barry. And that is the one part of it all that isn't worth understanding."

"But —"

"The real point of it all," she pursued, choosing her words with unwonted slowness and care, "the real point is that both you and John Anixter look on me as a chattel — to be offered for exchange without so much as consulting me. Yes," she insisted, as he made as though to protest, "a chattel. John regarded me that way — as a desirable chattel. That is why he married me. You regarded me as a desirable chattel. That is why you took me from him. He found me no longer desirable when I loved you. So he let you take me. Then, because you grew afraid that I was not the truly desirable chattel you had hoped I was, you try here to transfer me back to him. And he refuses to take back a chattel that he once found unsatisfactory. That is the whole case. Neither of you stopped for an instant to consider what my own wishes might be. It's — it's hard" — the muted voice ever so briefly losing its dull steadiness — "to find (Continued on page 138)



Barry did not at all like the tender solicitude shown by one of the men in replacing round her shoulders the film of silken scarf that had fallen to the floor



First Aid for Loony Biddle

A story of Archie by P. G. Wodehouse

Illustrated by
T. D. Skidmore

"And when I called him down, all he said was that he was a
pitcher and not a hat-stand." Archie was paralyzed.
He paid no attention to the hat-check boy

THE jeweler, a stout, comfortable man, leaned on the counter and fingered the bracelet lovingly. Archie Moffam, leaning on the other side of the counter, inspected it searchingly, and wished that he knew more about these rummy little objects; for he had rather a sort of idea that the merchant was scheming to do him in the eyeball. In a chair by his side, Reggie van Tuyl, half asleep as usual, yawned despondently. He had permitted Archie to lug him into this shop in order to help him select a birthday present for Lucille, and he wanted to buy it and go. Any form of sustained concentration fatigued Reggie.

"Now, this," said the jeweler, "I could do at eight hundred and fifty dollars."

"Grab it," murmured Mr. Van Tuyl.

The jeweler eyed him approvingly—a man after his own heart—but Archie looked doubtful. It was all very well for Reggie to tell him to grab it in that careless way. Reggie was a dashed millionaire, and no doubt bought bracelets by the pound or the gross or what-not; but he himself was in an entirely different position. It was only by what amounted to a jolly old miracle that he was in a position to purchase jewelry at all. Out of an absolutely blue sky he had received, two or three days ago, a present of five hundred dollars from an aunt in England. This, by thrift and enterprise—that is to say, by betting Reggie that the Giants would win the opening game of the series against the Pirates—he had contrived, on the previous day, to double. He was thus able to go to a thousand dollars for Lucille's birthday present, and it behooved him to see that he got his money's worth.

"Eight hundred and fifty," he said hesitatingly.

"Worth it," mumbled Reggie van Tuyl.

"More than worth it," amended the jeweler. "I can assure you that it is better value than you could get anywhere on Fifth Avenue."

"Yes?" said Archie. He took the bracelet and twiddled it

thoughtfully. "Well, one can't say fairer than that, can one—or two, as the case may be?" He frowned. "Oh, well; all right, my dear old jeweler. But it's rummy that women are so fearfully keen on these little thingummies, isn't it? I mean to say, can't see what they see in them. Stones, and all that. Still, there it is, of course!"

"There," said the jeweler, "as you say, it is. Will you take it with you, sir?"

Archie reflected.

"No—no—not take it with me. The fact is, you know, my wife's coming back from the country to-night, and it's her birthday to-morrow, and the thing's for her, and if it was popping about the place to-night, she might see it, and it would sort of spoil the surprise."

"Besides," said Reggie, achieving a certain animation now that the tedious business interview was concluded, "going to the ball game this afternoon—might get pocket picked. Yes; better have it sent."

"Where shall I send it, sir?"

"Eh? Oh, shoot it along to Mrs. Archibald Moffam, at the Cosmopolis. Buzz it in first thing to-morrow."

Having completed the satisfactory deal, the jeweler threw off the business manner and became chatty.

"So you are going to the ball game? It should be an interesting contest."

Reggie van Tuyl, now, by his own standards, completely awake, took exception to this remark.

"Not a bit of it!" he said decidedly. "No contest! Can't call it a contest. Walkover for the Pirates!"

Archie was stung to the quick. There is that about baseball which arouses enthusiasm and the partisan spirit in the unlikelyst bosoms. It is almost impossible for a man to live in America and not become gripped by the game—and Archie had long been one of its warmest adherents. He was a whole-hearted supporter of the Giants, and his only grievance against Reggie,



"What," inquired the young man, still bearing the burden of the conversation, "do you mean by following

in other respects an estimable young man, was that the latter, whose money had been inherited from steel-mills in that city, had an absurd regard for the Pirates, of Pittsburgh.

"What absolute bally rot!" he exclaimed. "Look what the Giants did to them yesterday!"

"Yesterday isn't to-day," said Reggie.

"No; it'll be a jolly sight worse," said Archie. "Loony Biddle'll be pitching for the Giants to-day."

"That's just what I mean. The Pirates have got his goat. Look what happened last time."

Archie understood, and his generous nature chafed at the innuendo. Loony Biddle—so-called by an affectionately admiring public as the result of certain marked eccentricities—was beyond dispute the greatest left-handed pitcher New York had possessed in the last decade; and it was generally considered by the dwellers on Manhattan Island that, while Henry Hudson and others might have done a certain amount for the city in their limited way, he was the man who had really put New York on the map.

But there was one blot on Mr. Biddle's otherwise stainless escutcheon. Five weeks before, on the occasion of the Giants' invasion of Pittsburgh, he had gone mysteriously to pieces. He had pitched weakly and erratically, and had been hammered out of the box almost before the game had begun. Few native-born partisans, brought up to baseball from the cradle, had been plunged into a profounder gloom on that occasion than Archie; but his soul revolted at the thought that that sort of thing could ever happen again.

"I'm not saying," continued Reggie, "that Biddle isn't a very fair pitcher, but it's cruel to send him against the Pirates, and somebody ought to stop it. Once a team gets a pitcher's goat, he's never any good against them again. He loses his nerve."

The jeweler nodded approval of this sentiment.

"They never come back," he said sententiously.

The fighting blood of the Moffams was now thoroughly stirred. Archie eyes his friend sternly.

"It seems to me, old companion," he said, "that a small bet is indicated at this juncture. How about it?"

"Don't want to take your money."

"You won't have to. In the cool twilight of the merry old

summer evening, I, friend of my youth and companion of my riper years, shall be trousering yours."

Reggie yawned. The day was very hot, and this argument was making him feel sleepy again.

"Well, just as you like, of course. Double or quits on yesterday's bet, if that suits you."

For a moment, Archie hesitated. Firm as was his faith in Mr. Biddle's stout left arm, he had not intended to do the thing on quite this scale. That thousand dollars of his was earmarked for Lucille's birthday present, and he doubted whether he ought to risk it. Then the thought that the honor of New York was in his hands decided him. Besides, the risk was negligible. Betting on Loony Biddle was like betting on the probable rise of the sun in the east. The thing began to seem to Archie a rather unusually sound and conservative investment. He remembered that the jeweler, until he drew him firmly but kindly to earth and urged him to curb his exuberance and talk business on a reasonable plane, had started brandishing bracelets that cost about two thousand. There would be time to pop in at the shop this evening, after the game, and change the one he had selected for one of these. Nothing was too good for Lucille on her birthday.

"Right-o!" he said. "Make it so, old friend."

Archie walked back to the Cosmopolis. No misgivings came to mar his perfect contentment. He felt no qualms about separating Reggie from another thousand dollars. Except for a little small change in the possession of the Messrs. Rockefeller and Vincent Astor, Reggie had all the money in the world and could afford to lose. He hummed a gay air as he entered the lobby and crossed to the cigar-stand to buy a few cigarettes to see him through the afternoon. The girl behind the cigar counter welcomed him with a bright smile. Archie was popular with all the employees of the Cosmopolis.

"It's a great day, Mr. Moffam."

"One of the brightest and best," agreed Archie. "Could you dig me out two or possibly three cigarettes of the usual description? I shall want something to smoke at the ball game."

"You going to the ball game?"

"Rather! Wouldn't miss it for a fortune."

"Say, you're getting to be quite the fan—ain't you, now?"

"Wouldn't miss it," repeated Archie earnestly, "for a bally fortune."



this young lady?" Archie was glad he had asked him. This was precisely what he wanted to explain

"No?"

"Absolutely no! Not with jolly old Biddle pitching."

The cigar-stand girl laughed amusedly.

"Is he pitching this afternoon? Say—that feller's a nut! D'you know him?"

"Know him?" Well, I've seen him pitch and so forth."

"I've got a girl friend who's engaged to him."

Archie looked at her with positive respect. It would have been more dramatic, of course, if she had been engaged to the great man herself, but, still, the mere fact that she had a girl friend in that astounding position gave her a sort of halo.

"No, really!" he said. "I say, by Jove—really! Fancy that!"

"Yes; she's engaged to him all right. Been engaged close on a coupla months now."

"I say—that's frightfully interesting!"

"It's funny about that guy," said the cigar-stand girl. "He's a nut. The fellow who said there's plenty of room at the top must have been thinking of Gus Biddle's head! He's crazy about m' girl friend, y'know, and, whenever they have a fuss, it seems like he sort of flies right off the handle."

"Goes in off the deep end, eh?"

"Yes, sir! Loses what little sense he's got. Why, the last time him and m' girl friend got to scrapping was when he was going off to Pittsburgh to play in that series about a month ago. He'd been out with her the day he left for there, and he had a grouch or something and he started making low, sneaky cracks about her uncle Sigsbee. Well, m' girl friend's got a nice disposition, but she c'n get mad, and she just left him flat and told him all was over. And he went off to Pittsburgh, and, when he started in to pitch the opening game, he just couldn't keep his mind on his job, and look what them assassins done to him! Five runs in the first inning! Yessir; he's a nut all right."

Archie was deeply concerned. So this was the explanation of that mysterious disaster, that weird tragedy which had puzzled the sporting press from coast to coast.

"Good God! Is he often taken like that?"

"Oh, he's all right when he hasn't had a fuss with m' girl friend," said the cigar-stand girl indifferently. Her interest in baseball was tepid. Women are too often like this—mere butterflies with no concern for the deeper side of life.

"Yes—but I say! What I mean to say, you know—are they

pretty pally now? The good old Dove of Peace flapping its little wings fairly briskly and all that?"

"Oh, I guess everything's nice and smooth just now. I seen m' girl friend yesterday, and Gus was taking her to the movies last night; so I guess everything's nice and smooth."

Archie breathed a sigh of relief.

"Took her to the movies, did he? Stout fellow!"

"I was to the funniest picture last week," said the cigar-stand girl. "Honest, it was a scream! It was like this—"

Archie listened politely, then, leaving his hat and stick with the boy bandit who guarded the grill-room door, went in to get a bite of lunch. His equanimity, shaken by the discovery of the rift in the peerless one's armor, was restored. Good old Biddle had taken the girl to the movies last night. Probably he had squeezed her hand a goodish bit in the dark. With what result? Why, the fellow would be feeling like one of those chappies who used to joust for the smiles of females in the Middle Ages. Presumably the girl would be at the game this afternoon, whooping him on, and good old Biddle would give of his very best and juiciest.

Encouraged by these thoughts, Archie lunched with an untroubled mind. Luncheon concluded, he proceeded to the lobby to buy back his hat and stick from the boy brigand. It was while he was conducting this financial operation that he observed that, at the cigar-stand, which adjoined the coat-and-hat alcove, his friend behind the counter had become engaged in conversation with another girl.

This was a determined-looking young woman in a blue dress and a large hat of a bold and flowery species. Archie happening to attract her attention, she gave him a glance out of a pair of fine brown eyes, then, as if she did not think much of him, turned to her companion and resumed their conversation, which, being of an essentially private and intimate nature, she conducted, after the manner of her kind, in a ringing soprano which penetrated into every corner of the lobby. Archie, waiting while the brigand reluctantly made change for a dollar bill, was privileged to hear every word.

"Right from the start, I seen he was in a ugly mood. You know how he gets, dearie. Chewing his upper lip and looking at you as if you were so much dirt beneath his feet. How was I to know he'd been shooting craps and had lost fifteen dollars fifty-

five, and, anyway, I don't see where he gets a license to work off his grouches on me. And I told him so. I said to him, 'Gus.' I said, 'if you can't be bright and smiling and cheerful when you take me out, why do you call around at all?' I said. Was I wrong or right, dearie?"

The girl behind the counter heartily endorsed her conduct. Once you let a man think he could use you as a door-mat, where were you?

"What happened then, honey?"

"Well, after that we went to the movies."

Archie started convulsively. The change from his dollar bill leaped in his hand. Some of it sprang overboard and tinkled across the floor with the brigand in pursuit. A monstrous suspicion had begun to take root in his mind.

"Well, we got good seats, but, well, you know how it is, once things start going wrong. You know that hat of mine, the one with the daisies and cherries and the feather. I'd taken it off and give it him to hold when we went in, and what do you think that fell'r done? Put it on the floor and crammed it under the seat, just to save himself the trouble of holding it on his lap. And when I called him down, all he said was that he was a pitcher and not a hat-stand."

Archie was paralyzed. He paid no attention to the hat-check boy, who was trying to induce him to accept treasure-trove to the amount of forty-five cents. His whole being was concentrated on this frightful tragedy which had burst upon him like a tidal wave. No possible room for doubt remained. "Gus" was the only Gus in New York that mattered, and this resolute and injured female before him was the Girl Friend, in whose slim hands rested the happiness of New York's baseball fans, the destiny of the unconscious Giants, and the fate of his thousand dollars. A strangled croak proceeded from his parched lips.

"Well, I didn't say anything at the moment. It just shows how them movies can work on a girl's feelings. It was an Adonis Bryant film, and, somehow, whenever I see him on the screen, nothing else seems to matter. I just get that goopy feeling, and couldn't start a fight if you asked me to. So we go off to have a soda, and I said to him, 'That sure was a lovely film, Gus.' And, would you believe me, he says straight out that he didn't think it was such a much, and he thought Adonis Bryant was a pill. A pill!" The Girl Friend's penetrating voice shook with emotion.

"He never!" exclaimed the shocked cigar-stand girl.

"He did, if I die the next minute. I wasn't more than half-way through my vanilla and maple, but I got up without a word and left him. And I ain't seen a sight of him since. So there you are, dearie! Was I right or wrong?"

The cigar-stand girl gave unqualified approval. What men like Gus Biddle needed for the salvation of their souls was an occasional good jolt right where it would do the most good.

"I'm glad you think I acted right, dearie," said the Girl Friend. "I guess I been too weak with Gus, and he's took advantage of it. I s'pose I'll have to forgive him one of these old days, but, believe me, it won't be for a week."

The cigar-stand girl was in favor of a fortnight.

"No," said the Girl Friend regretfully; "I don't believe I could hold out that long. But, if I speak to him inside a week—well! Well, I gotta be going off up-town to price some waists. Good-by, honey."

The cigar-stand girl turned to attend to an impatient customer, and the Girl Friend, walking with the firm and decisive steps which indicate character, made for the swing door leading to the street. And, as she went, the paralysis which had gripped Archie relaxed its hold. Still ignoring the forty-five cents which the hat-check boy continued to proffer, he leaped in her wake like a panther. The hat-check boy pocketed the money in a contented sort of way. He knew nothing of the frenzy and despair which had blackened life for the man from whom he had acquired the windfall, and something seems to tell one that, if he had known, he wouldn't have given a darn. Hat-check boys are like that—cold, calculating, callous—boys of blood and iron.

The swing door, having churned Archie around for a while, shot him out onto the sidewalk and, for a moment, he stood looking up and down the street till suddenly, through the crowd of pedestrians, he perceived a hat crowned with exotic flowers moving westward. Darting in pursuit, he came upon the Girl Friend just as she was stepping into an up-town car. The car was full, but not too full for Archie. He dropped his five cents into the box and reached for a vacant strap. He looked down upon the flowered hat. There she was. And there he was. In

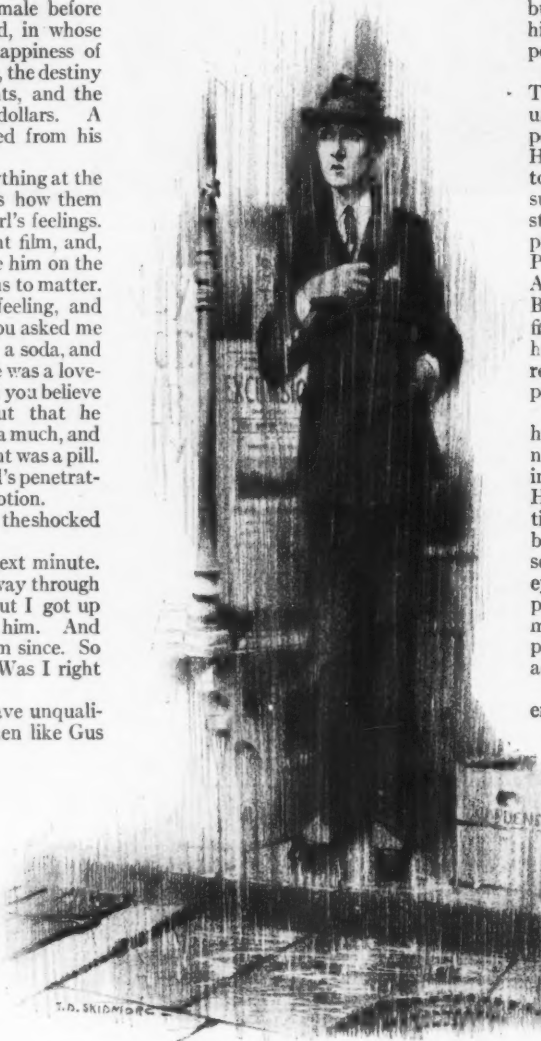
fact, putting it another way, there they both were. And now jolly well what? Archie rested his left ear against the forearm of a long, strongly built young man in a gray suit who had followed him into the car and was sharing his strap, and pondered.

Of course, in a way, the gadget was simple. The wheeze was, in a sense, straightforward and uncomplicated. What he wanted to do was to point out to the injured girl all that hung on her. He wished to touch her heart, to plead with her, to desire her to restate her war-aims, and to persuade her—before three o'clock, when that stricken gentleman would be stepping into the pitcher's box to loose off the first ball against the Pirates—to let bygones be bygones and forgive Augustus Biddle. He could see that all right. But the blighted problem was: how the deuce to find the opportunity to start. Archie removed his ear from the arm of the long young man and rested his jaw-bone there instead, and went on pondering.

The Girl Friend, who, for the first five minutes, had remained entirely concealed beneath her hat, now sought diversion by looking up and examining the faces of the upper strata of passengers. Her eye caught Archie's in a glance of recognition, and he smiled feebly, endeavoring to register bonhomie and good will. He was surprised to see a startled expression come into her brown eyes. Her face turned pink. At least, it was pink already, but it turned pinker. The next moment, the car having stopped to pick up more passengers, she jumped off and started to hurry across the street.

Archie was momentarily taken aback. When embarking on this business, he had never intended it to become a blend of otter-hunting and a moving-picture chase. He had anticipated a slight difficulty in getting the girl sufficiently alone to be able to talk freely to her, but he had never supposed that the sight of him would send her whizzing about New York like a snipe. He followed her off the car with a sense that his grip on the affair was slipping.

Preoccupied with these thoughts, he did not perceive that the long young man who had shared his



Suddenly, like one of those flashes that were lighting up the gloomy sky, a thought lighted up Archie's mind. "By Jove! If this keeps up, there won't be a ball game to-day"



"Something nifty in tweeds?" inquired the businesslike proprietor of this haven. "Or, maybe, yes, a nice serge?" Archie wanted to talk about clothes, but not yet. "I say, laddie," he said hurriedly: "lend me your ear for half a jiffy. Stow me away for a moment, and I'll buy anything you want"

strap had alighted, too. His eyes were fixed on the vanishing figure of the Girl Friend, who, having buzzed at a smart pace into Sixth Avenue, was now legging it in the direction of the staircase leading to one of the stations of the elevated railway. Dashing up the stairs after her, he paid another nickel—this business was running into money, but that could not be helped—and shortly afterward found himself suspended, as before, from a strap, gazing upon the now familiar flowers on top of her hat. From another strap further down the car swayed the long young man in the gray suit.

The train rattled on, crossed Broadway, and, snaking round, entered Ninth Avenue. Once or twice, when it stopped, the girl seemed undecided whether to leave or remain. She half rose, then sank back again. Finally, she walked resolutely out of the car, and Archie, following, found himself in a part of New York

strange to him. The inhabitants of this district appeared to eke out a precarious existence, not by taking in one another's washing but by selling one another second-hand clothes. Almost every shop seemed to belong to a small tailor.

Archie glanced at his watch. He had lunched early, but so crowded with emotions had been the period following lunch that he was surprised to find that the hour was only just two. The discovery was a pleasant one. With a full hour before the scheduled start of the game, much might be achieved. He hurried after the girl, and came up with her just as she turned the corner into one of those forlorn side-streets which are populated chiefly by children, cats, desultory loafers, and empty meat-cans.

The girl stopped and turned. Archie smiled a winning smile.

"I say, my dear, sweet creature!" he said. "I say, my dear old thing—one moment!"

"Is that so?" said the Girl Friend.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Is that so?"

Archie began to feel certain tremors. Her eyes were gleaming, and her determined mouth had become a perfectly straight line of scarlet. It was going to be difficult to be chatty with this girl. She was going to be a hard audience.

"If you could spare me a couple of minutes of your valuable time—"

"Say!" The lady drew herself up menacingly. "You tie a can to yourself and disappear. Fade away, or I'll call a cop!"

Archie was horrified at this misinterpretation of his motives. One or two children, playing close at hand, and a loafer who was trying to keep the wall from falling down seemed pleased. There was a colorless existence, and to the rare purple moments which had enlivened it in the past, the calling of a cop had been the unflinching preliminary. The loafer nudged a fellow loafer sunning himself against the same wall. The children, abandoning the meat-can round which their game had centered, drew closer.

"My dear old soul," said Archie, "you don't understand."

"Don't I? I know your sort, you trailing arbutus!"

"No, no! My dear old thing, believe me; I wouldn't dream!"

"Are you going—or aren't you?"

Eleven more children joined the ring of spectators. The loafers stared silently, like awakened crocodiles.

"But, I say, listen: I only wanted—"

At this point, another voice spoke.

"Say!"

The word "say," almost more than any word in the American language, is capable of a variety of shades of expression. It can be genial; it can be jovial; it can be appealing. It can also be truculent. The "say" which at this juncture smote upon Archie's ear-drum with a suddenness which made him leap in the air was truculent; and the two loafers and the twenty-seven children who now formed the audience were well satisfied with the dramatic development of the performance. To their experienced ears, the word had the right ring.

Archie spun round. At his elbow stood a long, strongly built young man in a gray suit.

"Well?" said this young man hastily. And he extended a large, freckled face toward Archie's.

It seemed to the latter, as he backed against the wall, that the young man's neck must be composed of india-rubber. It appeared to be growing longer every moment. His face, besides being freckled, was a dull brick-red in color; his lips curled back in an unpleasant snarl, showing a gold tooth, and beside him, swaying in an ominous sort of way, hung two clenched red hands about the size of two legs of young mutton. Archie eyed him with a growing apprehension. There are moments in life when, passing idly on our way, we see a strange face, look into strange eyes, and, with a sudden glow of human warmth, say to ourselves, "We have found a friend." This was not one of those moments. The only person Archie had ever seen in his life who looked less friendly was the sergeant-major who had trained him in the early days of the war before he had got his commission.

"I've had my eye on you," said the young man.

He still had his eye on him. It was a hot, gimletlike eye, and it pierced the recesses of Archie's soul. He backed a little further against the wall.

Archie was frankly disturbed. He was no poltroon, and had proved the fact on many occasions during the days when the entire German army seemed to be picking on him personally; but he hated and shrank from anything in the nature of a bally public scene. During the war, it had been different. Then, everybody had been making scenes, and a chappie who hove bombs about and generally dropped the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere was in the push and didn't feel he was making himself conspicuous. But in this era of peace and in the middle of a crowd in a New York street, his soul revolted at the prospect of a vulgar brawl. And you had only to look at this large blighter's face to perceive that vulgar brawls were meat and drink to him.

"What," inquired the young man, still bearing the burden of the conversation and shifting his left hand a little further behind his back, "do you mean by following this young lady?"

Archie was glad he had asked him. This was precisely what he wanted to explain.

"My dear old lad—" he began.

In spite of the fact that he had asked a question and presumably desired a reply, the sound of Archie's voice seemed to be

more than the young man could endure. It deprived him of the last vestiges of restraint. With a rasping snarl, he brought his left fist round in a sweeping semicircle in the direction of Archie's head.

Archie was no novice in the art of self-defense. Since his early days at school, he had learned much from leather-faced professors of the science. He had been watching this unpleasant young man's eyes with close attention, and the latter could not have indicated his scheme of action more clearly if he had sent him a formal note. Archie saw the swing all the way. He stepped nimbly aside; the fist crashed against the wall, and the young man fell back with a yelp of anguish.

"Gus!" screamed the Girl Friend, bounding forward. She flung her arms round the injured man, who was ruefully examining a hand which, always of an out-size, was now swelling to still further dimensions. "Gus darling!"

A sudden chill gripped Archie. So engrossed had he been with his mission that it had never occurred to him that the love-lorn pitcher might have taken it into his head to follow the girl as well, in the hope of putting in a word for himself. Yet such, apparently, had been the case. Well, this had definitely done it. Two loving hearts were united again in complete reconciliation, but a fat lot of good that was! It would be days before the misguided Loony Biddle would be able to pitch with a hand like that. It looked like a ham already, and was still swelling. Probably the wrist was sprained. For at least a week, the greatest left-handed pitcher of his time would be about as much use to the Giants in any professional capacity as a cold in the head. And on that crippled hand depended the fate of all the money Archie had in the world! He wished now that he had not thwarted the fellow's simple enthusiasm. To have had his head knocked forcibly through a brick wall would not have been pleasant, but the ultimate outcome would not have been as unpleasant as this. With a heavy heart, Archie prepared to withdraw, to be alone with his sorrow.

At this moment, however, the Girl Friend, releasing her wounded lover, made a sudden dash for him, with the plainest intention of blotting him from the earth.

"No, I say! Really!" said Archie, bounding backward. "I mean to say—"

In a series of events, all of which had been a bit thick, this, in his opinion, achieved the maximum of thickness. It was the extreme, ragged, outside edge of the limit. To brawl with a fellow man in a public street had not been bad, but to be brawled with by a girl—the shot was not on the board. Absolutely not on the board. There was only one thing to be done. It was dashed undignified, no doubt, for a fellow to pick up the old waukeesis and leg it in the face of the enemy, but there was no other course. Archie started to run, and, as he did so, one of the loafers made the mistake of gripping him by the collar of his coat.

"I got him!" observed the loafer.

There is a time for all things. This was essentially not the time for anyone of the male sex to grip the collar of Archie's coat. If a syndicate of Dempsey, Carpentier, and one of the zoo gorillas had endeavored to stay his progress at that moment, they would have had reason to consider it a rash move. Archie wanted to be elsewhere, and the blood of generations of Mo-fams, many of whom had swung a wicked ax in the free-for-all mix-ups of the Middle Ages, boiled within him at any attempt to revise his plans. There was a good deal of the loafer, but it was all soft. Releasing his hold when Archie's heel took him shrewdly on the shin, he received a nasty punch in what would have been the middle of his waistcoat if he had worn one, uttered a gurgling bleat, like a wounded sheep, and collapsed against the wall. Archie, with a torn coat, rounded the corner and sprinted down Ninth Avenue.

The suddenness of the move gave him an initial advantage. He was half-way down the first block before the vanguard of the pursuit poured out of the side-street. Continuing to travel well, he skimmed past a large truck which had pulled up across the street, and moved on. The noise of those who pursued was loud and clamorous in the rear, but the truck hid him momentarily from their sight, and it was this fact which led Archie, the old campaigner, to take his next step.

It was perfectly obvious—he was aware of this even in the novel excitement of the chase—that a chappie couldn't hoof it at twenty-five miles an hour indefinitely along a main thoroughfare of a great city without exciting remark. He must take cover. Cover! That was the wheeze. He looked about him for cover.

"You want a nice suit?"

(Continued on page 89)

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ADELE ROLLAND has been associated
for several years with successful farce-
comedies, and is now in "Ladies' Night."

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMPBELL STUDIO



BERNICE DEWEY'S great beauty gives her a front position in "The Midnight Rounders."

50

PHOTOGRAPH BY ISA D. BOWMAN



EMILY DRANGE is one
of the beauties of the
Ziegfeld "Midnight Frolic."

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMPBELL WATSON



JANE COWL, after a long tour of the country this season in her latest success, "Smilin' Through," will take it to London next summer for an indefinite period.

52

PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE

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A Rival to the Prince

A love-story by
Frank R. Adams,
which means
there's none better

Illustrated by
Charles D.
Mitchell

THERE was a jest on Irene's lips only the instant before Romance, sweeping by on careless wings, knocked her, so to speak, flat.

"If the prince dances with anyone except Mrs. Senator Colburn's two daughters this evening, it's going to cause international complications," she had said to Crystal Dunbar.

"Jealous?" hazarded Crystal. "Isn't his name on your program?"

Irene made a gamin face at her.

"You know how much I care about these social stunts. But, to satisfy your unladylike curiosity, I don't mind admitting that his name isn't on my program any more than it is on yours, Crys. You and I have got just as good a chance of having our toes stepped on by royalty as a Yale man has of going to Harvard when he dies. Mrs. Colburn hasn't noticed yet that we are not designs pasted on the wall-paper, and until she does—"

"Come with me, little one; the prince has expressed a desire to meet a genuine American huckleberry," a masculine voice interrupted. "I think, if he was a real '*honi soit*' gent, he would walk over on his own two dogs, or player-piano manipulators; but it seems they're not doing it that way at Windsor Castle this year. He said, though, that you needn't crawl to him on your hands and knees when I told him that you were a working girl and that silk stockings are the price they are, even if you get 'em with lisle tops, which I wouldn't go so far as to tell the prince, even if I knew."

"Hush!" Irene admonished. "You've put on the wrong record by mistake. The only words you ever spoke in the hearing of the prince were: 'Hurray! Hurray!' and there were ten thousand others making the same remark."

"You wrong me, child. Me and the prince are just like this"—he held up two fingers intertwined to indicate the degree of intimacy. "Honest—and outside of business hours you admit I'm that—you're to come over and be presented."

Irene looked at him half incredulously.

"Why, Dan, do you mean it? How did you ever arrange it?"

Dan pretended to preen himself.

"It was a cinch, although I admit that I'm a moderately good arranger. Come along, before he forgets all the selling talk I've been giving him about you."

Evidently he was serious. Irene had been accustomed since childhood to the idea that Dan could accomplish practically anything, but this seemed rather out of his line. Still, she let him lead her away.



"Let's go for a little ride in the country," she suggested wistfully. "It's so beautiful, and I've been cooped up so long"

The occasion was the Victory Ball given in honor of the Prince of Wales at the Dodge City Country Club. Mrs. Senator Colburn had engineered it, and she admitted, even to herself, that she had done something. The Victory Ball with Edward Albert for a head-liner put Dodge City on the map of the world. It also got Mrs. Colburn herself into the sub-scare-heads, which isn't so bad for a lady who was once a tinker's daughter. She was now forty-five and the possessor of one of those figures for which the words "dowager" was invented, and of two unmarried daughters, one of whom was not so very eligible and the other was worse than that. Their clothes were made in Paris, but it didn't do any good.

Now, Irene was not like that. Here are the unvarnished specifications:

Five feet two; slender, but not fragile; shapely without corsets; clear skin, eyes, and thinking apparatus; fine nose, wrists, and ankles; rich coloring, which cropped out as chestnut hair, brown eyes, and interesting lips, usually just red enough—all this plus vivacity which was not garrulous. Irene knew almost



"Come with me, little one; the prince has expressed a desire to meet a genuine American huckleberry."

as much about things in general as a purchasing agent, but she never acknowledged her wisdom unless you tapped a vein of it. This gave her a rating of AA-1 as a conversationalist. She let the other fellow do most of the talking, but threw in just enough intelligent questions to show that she was only one jump behind.

It sounds as if Irene were the village belle, the prize of the season's débutantes. But she wasn't. She earned her own living as the private secretary of the president of the Dodge City Re-

frigerator Company. She had never had any educational advantages, unless not going to a girl's school is an educational advantage. Some fathers contend that it is. What Irene knew, outside of grammar-school courses, she had picked up by herself. In her case, the picking seemed to have been very good. Because Irene knew a lot, even about things not especially connected with the manufacture of refrigerators.

She had been just busy enough with real life not to have re-



Irene looked at him half incredulously. "Why, Dan, do you mean it? How did you ever arrange it?"

quired a great deal of outside diversion. An occasional dance, and the theater, even less often, had been the limit of her dissipation ever since Dan Sullivan had taken her entertainment program in charge. Dancing parties had come a little too late in her life to thrill her. She had a good time and danced better than most girls who had made an exhaustive life-study of it, but she had never let it overshadow her daily existence.

Even this ball for the prince had been little different from the

others. True, she had blown herself for something a trifle nifty in the way of a costume—gray chiffon it was, which made her look a beautiful moth—but aside from the fact that she was grateful to Dan for having secured the rather highly coveted invitation for her, she had not had any particular emotions about it one way or the other. She had not even expected to meet the young prince. There would be fifty others whose social prestige more entitled them to his society. Irene even smiled tolerantly to

herself at the petty ambitions of her socially inclined friends who seemed to care so much about shaking hands with the man who would one day be a king.

Just a word about Dan Sullivan, and then we can get out of the ring and see if anything happens.

He was assistant to the business manager of the city in a town which had abolished politics in favor of efficiency. It was a good-enough job for a young couple to get married on, but Irene had, so far, evaded the issue.

The real reason was because she had allowed her romantic side to atrophy. She liked Dan, and other men, too, because they were successful and were good company, but she had never fallen down in worship before a masculine idol because he looked like a god in a track suit or had hair that curled a little in damp weather or something like that, and she certainly had no mid-Victorian ideas about clinging to a gent who treated her rough.

She probably regarded Dan with extreme favor—she should have, because his every waking-moment was devoted to doing something to please her—but every time he led her up to the hurdles, she refused the jump. Nothing so far had swept her off her feet. And now, to-night, here was Irene meeting the Prince of Wales! How could Dan or Irene or even the prince foresee what would happen?

One thing that happened was that the prince had the time of his life instead of the rather dull evening he had anticipated after meeting the Colburn family *en masse*.

Another thing that might have happened was that Irene might have been stabbed in the back by Mrs. Colburn if the latter had been able to find a dagger.

Another thing that really happened was that Dan stood outside on the country-club veranda and smoked cigarettes for three whole dances while Edward Albert elevated Irene to the local peerage by laughing at everything she said while they trotted the fox according to the modern custom.

To the prince, this was just an incident in the American trans-continental tour. In a week, he would have forgotten the very name of Dodge City. But Dan had a hunch that the evening might make more of a dent in his own life and Irene's. He did not contemplate with any degree of pleasure a lifelong competition with the memory of the most engaging young heir apparent who has ever grinned from out the pages of English history, transforming it into an Anthony Hope romance.

His premonition wasn't so far off, either. Of this, he had almost immediate proof. It was a dreamy-eyed Irene whom he took home that night in the hired limousine, and Danny, suddenly and painfully wise in his own generation, did not slip his arm in back of her head, as he had been wont to do on previous homeward journeys. Instead, he held his left hand in his own right and preserved an introspective and miserable silence. Irene did not notice his restraint, which was just what he had feared.

Instinctively, Dan knew that she was up in the clouds, and that the kind of language he used—the crisp speech of the moment—would be a foreign tongue. Therefore he was dumb.

At last, in the hallway at Irene's home, there came a dreadful moment. That hall had been the scene of a regular ceremony nearly ever since they had known each other. This ceremony consisted of a reverent good-night kiss, which Dan had placed upon her unresisting lips. Dan had always done all the kissing; he knew that. Even for her passivity he had been grateful.

But to-night, what should he do? To omit the customary salute would make it seem as if he were jealous. But to kiss her might also be a tactical error.

While he was debating there in the dark, he felt her arms go round his neck and her lips sought his fervently.

Taken by surprise, Dan for a moment forgot to kiss back. Then, all at once, the passion that he had curbed so long burst its bounds and he seized her in a bearlike embrace.

"No! No!" Irene cried, pushing away from him. "Don't—"

Dan didn't need to ask for any explanation. He knew miserably enough what was the matter. He wasn't the right man.

For a moment, Irene, there in the darkness, had let him take the place of her dream, but contact had shattered the illusion.

Almost instantly, the old Irene, a calm, cool, self-sufficient, well-poised woman, tried to take control of affairs and restore things between them to the customary friendly basis.

"Dan, I'm—I'm sorry—"

But the harm was done. The specter wouldn't return to its grave. Irene couldn't go on with an explaining lie that would soothe away the hurt. And Dan himself was too wise to be lied to. So he stood for a moment in stunned silence and then said huskily, "Good-night," and turned to leave the house.

She did not call him back.

His heart had been hoping she would.

II

BOTH Dan and Irene spent sleepless nights. Dan was used to it, having been a Friday-night poker player ever since he was able to tell a wild deuce from the joker, and Irene did not look any the worse for it, either. Quite the contrary, in fact. There were a lot of hitherto inactive human blood-corpuscles racing round in Irene's cosmos that made her all pink and interesting. She had made a defiant trade with life, had consciously bartered a lot of future contentment for a fleeting handful of happiness, and she was enjoying the rush of air past her while the speed was still high. True, she was coasting now, and there was not apt to be any further motor-impulse, but the gay irresponsibility was wonderful while it lasted. The moments of exhilaration were too precious to be wasted in sleeping.

Exhilaration, however, was not the cause of Dan Sullivan's insomnia. The fact is that he had an acute attack of zelotypia, or grass-green jealousy.

Of course, it was his own fault that Irene had met the prince. He had never dreamed, when he had secured the invitation to the Victory Ball, or even when he had maneuvered the introduction to the prince himself, that she would really dance with him and captivate him as she had. It was an absurd accident that it had turned out that way. But it was a poor salve for a wounded heart, and Dan's customary determination to be cheerful at whatever cost rather wilted under the glaring futility of it.

And, with a sinking heart, he recollected that he had secured for Irene a ticket to the reviewing-stand for the parade which was to be held that day, the final one of the royal visit.

The prince's next stop was to be across the border in Canadian territory, and a company of Highlanders had been sent over to escort him to British soil. In front of the reviewing-stand was to take place a sort of ceremony in which the prince, escorted by all the available American veterans of the German War in the neighborhood, was to meet his Canadian guard and be transferred to their care. All the shops and offices in the town had been closed for the occasion.

Yes; Irene came, and occupied the seat he had secured for her in the grand stand. Dan hadn't been able to define his mental processes exactly, but perhaps he had hoped that she would not come. It was going to be a hard half-hour for him, because he had to be there in his official capacity and his seat was next to hers.

Well, it had to be gone through with.

"Lo, Miss Friggie Rator," he greeted, using his week-day form of address to her. But it didn't sound funny this time.

She turned a radiantly smiling face toward him, a kind of a delightfully expectant expression which she had never worn for him.

"Good-morning, Dan," she said, making room beside her.

Dan would have laughed if his heart had not been so sore. She did it as if she were a queen. In her manner, she was living up to the illusion of her dream. Formality of speech was especially marked in Irene, who hitherto had been one of the best give-and-take conversational fussers in the middle Northwest. So haughtiness was as unexpected from her as speed from a telephone central.

No; Dan didn't laugh. Instead, he sat down, repressing a desire to address her ironically as "Your Royal Highness" and listened unheeding to the distant blare of a band which was coming down the street.

The American detachments arrived first, one company of infantry ahead of the prince's carriage, and another behind it with a thousand or so non-uniformed citizens bringing up the rear.

The reviewing-stand was in the public square.

The prince was escorted to the stand, and then the soldiers were deployed in single rank round three sides of the square.

Then came the Canadian band. There were one hundred and twenty of them, recruited from heaven knew where, and they played "Tipperary" in a way that made your heart ache. O Lord, how that band marched—in open order, double column of squads! After all is said and done, a kilt is a bonny kind of uniform to parade in. When the skirts swing in unison, there is a snap to it you don't get with trousers and puttees, no matter how much you drill.

After the band came the company of Highlanders. They marched in the formation in which they had been mustered into the service at the beginning of the war, with blank files for the casualties. There were many blank files. In some places, an entire squad was represented by one man. It was a recruiting

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He knew that her happiness mattered above all other earthly things, that he would give his life just to have her continue to live, to have her partake of those things of life she had not yet tasted

trick which had been used many times during the war, but it was still impressive, and made you clinch your hands a little and look round at something that wasn't there, just to make sure you wouldn't cry.

Yes; it was a conventional trick, but the Canadians had something else up their sleeves which was newer. In the entire company of two hundred and fifty men, minus casualties, there was not a single officer. Perhaps some of the men held recent commissions, but they all were marching in the ranks, as they had, no doubt, before casualties had earned their promotions. Not a subaltern guided the column of squads or marched with the file-closers.

At the head of the company walked a black horse, saddled, but with crossed stirrups. No one guided him, not visibly, anyway, but he marched in perfect time with the balance of his dead master's command.

Of course, it was only a trick—the result of infinite patience in training—but, Lord—what a mean trick to play upon a susceptible audience which was already worked up to the point of tears by that melody which meant heartache and farewell! It took a man of very dull imagination indeed who could not almost see the youthful captain, astride his mount, proud of his men and sure of their devotion.

In the center of the square before the reviewing-stand, the horse, doubtless at a whispered word of command from some one in the ranks (because, mind you, this is no testimonial for the Society of Psychological Research), came to an abrupt halt and faced the prince.

There was no command, but the men came to "Right front into line!" the rifles rattling to the ground with machine-gun precision as each squad came to a halt in its appointed place. Then, the entire company, amid dead silence, came from the "Right dress!" which they had been holding to "Front!" Then, still without a word of command, they presented arms flawlessly.

A burst of applause crashed from the reviewing-stand and the crowded surrounding sidewalks and building. It was theatric, only a trick, a part of the foolish ritual by which men express their devotion to a cause or to a man, or even to kings or princes, who are less than men in a way, because they have been created by imagination. It was an appeal to the heart, never to

the head, but it made hard-fisted business men get out of their seats and wave their hats, and it made every woman flutter her handkerchief—as much as she could spare it from blowing her nose and wiping her eyes. And it made everybody mentally sort of look round and wonder if there wasn't something or somebody he could die for. It was only emotional intoxication, but tell me, you who have ever felt it, ain't it a grand and glorious feeling?

The prince himself frankly wiped his eyes. Apparently he had not been expecting it, and it got him in his boyish heart. He stood up and saluted smartly.

One of the men passed his rifle to a comrade and stepped out from the ranks. Perhaps he was really an officer. Anyway, he wore the uniform of a private. Saluting, he said,

"The men of this company, in the absence of their officers, deceased, request that your Royal Highness take command."

That finished, the soldier stepped over to the captain's horse, uncrossed the stirrups from the pommel, and stood at attention by the horse's head.

Then the prince did a very unautocratic sort of thing. He was standing in a box at the front of the stand, and in response to the invitation of his soldiers—for they were his soldiers—he placed one hand on the rail and vaulted over to the ground.

He didn't say anything even then; but he approached the captain's horse, saluted the invisible rider, and, with infinite tenderness, recrossed the stirrups over the pommel. After saluting again, he turned sharply on his heel and walked over to the front line of men. There he took up the rifle which had been abandoned by the man who had addressed him from the ranks, stepped into one of the vacant places, and brought his rifle smartly to "Present arms!"

There was a tap on the drums, and the rifles went automatically to "Shoulder arms!" The company-front dissolved without command into a column of squads, and the column marched away to the triumphant strains of the "Black Watch March."

There wasn't a sound in the grand stand, hardly a movement as everybody watched those swinging skirts, the rise and fall of the helmets as the bodies of the marching men came up and down with the swing of the left foot.

Number Two of the rear rank of the (Continued on page 112)



Clancy made her way south

Find *the* Woman

The characters in Mr. Roche's new novel:

CLANCY DEANE, beauty and youth personified, just come to New York from Maine to seek fame in moving pictures.

FAY MARSTON (Mrs. Ike Weber), a chance acquaintance, who takes Clancy—known to her as Florine Ladue—to a party given by Zenda, a prominent motion-picture producer. Ike Weber is caught cheating at cards; a fight ensues. Clancy flees, and is now being looked for as one of Weber's accomplices.

DAVID RANDALL, a rich young man, whom Clancy mistakes for a taxi-driver, and who motors her to her hotel after her flight from the Zenda party. She meets him the next day in a restaurant. The acquaintance turns rapidly into love on Randall's part. He is about to leave for California on business relating to a moving-picture combine, and asks Clancy to marry him at once and go with him. This she will not do. She doesn't love him—or, at least, she thinks she doesn't.

MORRIS BEINER, a theatrical agent, to whom Clancy—as Florine Ladue—goes with a card of introduction from Fanchon DeLisle. Beiner insults Clancy; she defends herself. Beiner falls, and Clancy leaves by way of the fire-escape. The next morning, she reads that Beiner has been found stabbed to death with a paper-knife, and that a girl is being sought. She seeks new lodgings near Washington Square. She is almost penniless, for she fears to touch the money she has deposited in a bank under her stage name.

SOPHIE CAREY, a painter of some note, to whom Clancy is introduced by Randall. She takes an immediate fancy to Clancy and resolves to befriend her.

SALLY HENDERSON, a real-estate agent and interior decorator. On Mrs. Carey's recommendation, she employs Clancy.

GRANNIS, half-owner of the Zenda Films. He was at the Zenda party, and recognizes Clancy when he goes to Miss Henderson to rent an apartment. Clancy is sent with him and is successful in her mission, but, believing her to be one of Weber's accomplices, he waylays her in the street afterward, and forces her to go to tea with him and have a talk. It appears that he is not loyal to Zenda and wishes to protect Weber. He gives Clancy a thousand dollars and tells her to keep quiet about Weber. She writes Zenda, telling him what Grannis has done and returns the money to the latter. The next day, Clancy is summoned by telephone to Zenda's office. There she finds not Zenda but Grannis and Mr. and Mrs. Weber. They threaten to have her arrested on a false charge of stealing a pearl necklace from Mrs. Weber unless she accepts ten thousand dollars to leave town and keep silent about Weber's cheating Zenda at cards. In great fear, she allows them to press the money upon her, and rushes from the office.

PHILIP VANDERVENT, assistant district attorney of New York County, whom Clancy meets at a party given by Mrs. Carey. He greatly alarms Clancy by telling her that he is searching for one Florine Ladue, suspected of being Beiner's slayer. He has located Fanchon DeLisle, whose card, introducing Clancy as Florine Ladue, has been found in Beiner's office. From Fanchon, the authorities will learn where and who Florine is. Clancy now gives up hope. She goes to Vandervent's to tell her story and surrender. While waiting, she picks up a paper and reads of Fanchon's sudden death. When she sees Vandervent, she faints away.

JUDGE WALBROUGH and his wife, who are guests at the Carey party. They became much interested in Clancy, and make up their minds to look after her while she is in New York.



across Washington Square

A novel of Youth and Mystery by Arthur Somers Roche

Illustrated by Dean Cornwell

XVIII

CLANCY came out of her faint mentally alert, although physically weak. It took her but the smallest fraction of time after she recovered consciousness to remember all that had led up to her collapse. And she kept her eyes closed long enough to marshal to her aid all those defensive instincts inherent in the human species. So, when she did open her eyes, that consummate courage which is mistaken for histrionism made her wreath her lips in a smile. She was lying on a leather-covered couch in what she learned, in a moment, was Vandervent's private office. Her eyes rested on the tenant of that office. His broad shoulders were slightly stooped as he bent toward her. In his hand, he held a glass of water. She noted immediately that his hand shook, that water slopped over the edge of the glass.

"You—feel better?" he asked breathlessly.

Clancy sat upright, her hand straying to her hair. She looked beyond Vandervent to where stood a man in a badly cut blue suit. His black mustache was gray at the roots, and the vanity that this use of dye indicated was proved by the outthrust of his lower lip. A shrewder observer than Clancy—one versed in the study of physiognomy—would have known that the jutting lip had been trained to come forward, that the aggressiveness it denoted was the aggressiveness of the bully, not of a man of character. His round chin was belligerent enough, as were his

little round blue eyes, but there was that lack of coordination in his features that is found in all weak souls.

But, to Clancy, he was terrifying. His small eyes were filled with suspicion, filled with more than that—with a menace that was personal.

Clancy reached for the glass of water; she drank it thirstily, yet in a leisurely manner. She watched the blue-suited man closely. She put back the glass into Vandervent's outstretched hand.

"Thank you—so much," she said. "It's a wonder that you didn't let me lie where I fell, after my playing such a silly joke."

She saw Vandervent cast a glance over his shoulder at the blue-suited man. His head nodded slightly. Had he phrased it in words, he could not more clearly have said, "I told you so."

And if the blue-suited man had replied verbally, he could not have said more clearly than he did by the expression of his eyes, "She's lying."

Vandervent's shoulders shrugged slightly; his keen gray eyes gleamed. Once again it was as though he spoke and said, "I'll show you that she isn't."

It was a swift byplay, but need sharpens one's wits. Not that Clancy's ever were dull, for, indeed, a lesser character, even in such danger as hers, might have been too concerned with her physical well-being, her appearance, to notice anything else. But she caught the byplay, and it brought a silent sigh of relief up from her chest. She was on her own ground now, the ground



Vandervent wheeled and glared at the man. "That'll be about all, Spofford!" he snapped

of sex. Had Vandervent been a woman, such a woman as Sophie Carey or Sally Henderson, Clancy would have surrendered immediately, would have known that she had not a chance in the world of persuading any woman that she had played a joke when she announced herself as Florine Ladue. But with a man—with Philip Vandervent, whose hand shook as he held a glass of water for her, whose eyes expressed a flattering anxiety—Clancy's smile would have been scornful had not scorn been a bit out of place at the moment. Instead, it was shyly confident.

"A—er—a joke, of course, Miss Deane," said Vandervent.

"Not so very funny, though, after all," said Clancy, with just enough timidity in her manner to flatter Vandervent.

The blue-coated man snorted.

"Joke! 'Funny!' Excuse me, lady; but where do you get your humor?"

Vandervent wheeled and glared at the man.

"That'll be about all, Spofford!" he snapped.

Spofford shrugged.

"You're the boss," he said. "Only—how does she happen to know the name Florine Ladue? Answer me that, will you?"

"I told her," said Vandervent shortly.

Spofford caressed his mustache.

"Oh, I getcha. Oh-h!" His grin was complimentary neither to Clancy nor Vandervent. Then it died away; his eyes became shrewd, although his voice was drawling. "And the faintin'—that was part of the joke, eh, lady?"

Clancy felt a little chill of nervous apprehension run between her shoulder-blades. Confidence left her. This man Spofford, she seemed to foresee, might be dangerous. She was not out of the woods yet. But Vandervent's words reassured her.

"Miss Deane doesn't need to explain anything to you, Spofford."

There was a touch of petulance in the assistant district attorney's voice. Spofford recognized it.

"Sure not, Mr. Vandervent. Certainly she don't. Only—" He paused; he turned, and started for the door.

Vandervent recalled him sharply.

"What do you mean by 'only,' Spofford?"

"Well, she come in here and said she was Florine Ladue—and then she faints when you come out to see her. I meant that, if there was any of the newspaper boys hangin' around—"

"There weren't," said Vandervent. "And if the papers should mention Miss Deane's joke—" The threat was quite patent.

"They won't," said Spofford.

He cast a glance at Clancy. It was a peculiar glance, a glance that told her that in his eyes she was a suspicious character—no better than she should be, to put it mildly.

And Vandervent's expression, as he turned toward her, drove away what fears Spofford's expression had aroused. For, despite his effort to seem casual, the young man was excited. And not excited because of the name that she had sent in, or because she had fainted, but excited simply because Clancy Deane was alone in the room with him. He moved toward her. Quite calmly she assumed control of the situation, and did it by so simple a method as extending her hand for the glass which he still held and uttering the single word: "Please."

She held the glass to her lips for a full minute, sipping slowly. Falsehood was repugnant to her. Yet she must think of how best to deceive Vandervent.

"I suppose I've made you very angry," she said, putting the glass down upon the couch beside her.

"Angry?" How could you make me angry—by coming to see me?"

Vandervent, with an acquaintance that comprised the flower of American and European society, was no different from any other young and normal male. His attitude now was that of the young man from Zenith or any other town in America. He was embarrassed and flattered. And he was so because a pretty girl was showing a certain interest in him.

"But to—fool you! I—you'll forgive me?" She was conscious that she was pleading prettily.

"Forgive you? Why—" Vandervent had difficulty in finding words. He was not a particularly impressionable young man. Had he been so, he could not, with his name and fortune, have remained a bachelor until his thirtieth birthday.

Clancy took up the not easily rolling ball of conversation.

"Because it was a terrible impertinence. I—you see—"

She paused in her turn.

"Jolly good joke!" said Vandervent, finally finding, apparently to oblige his guest, humor in the situation. "You can't imagine my excitement. Just had a wire from the chief of police in Belknap, Ohio, that Fanchon DeLisle was dead. Didn't see how we could locate this Ladue woman, when in comes a clerk saying that she's outside. I tell you, I never was so excited. Then I saw you, and you—tell me: why did you faint?" He put the question suddenly.

"Why did I faint?" She tried to laugh, and succeeded admirably. "I'm used to cold weather and blizzards. In Zenith sometimes, it is thirty below, and the snow is piled ten feet high in the big drifts. But one dresses for it, or doesn't go outdoors. And, to-day, I wanted to see New York, so much. I've only been here since Monday. The cars aren't running very regularly, so I walked down-town. And I guess I grew cold and tired. I feel ever so much better now," she ended chirpily.

"I'm glad of that," he smiled.

"And some one told me that this was the Criminal Courts Building, and I thought—I thought of—" She paused at exactly the right moment.

"Of me?" asked Vandervent. He colored faintly.

"I'm here," said Clancy. "And I thought that perhaps you wouldn't remember my name; so I—thought I'd play a joke. You will forgive me, won't you?"

He laughed.

"I'm afraid that Spofford won't, but I will."

"Spofford?" The man who was here?" asked Clancy.

"One of the detectives attached to the staff. Hasn't much sense of humor, I'm afraid. But it doesn't matter."

He sat down, pulling up a chair opposite her.

"I think it's mighty nice of you to call down here, Miss Deane."

"You don't think it's bold of me?" she asked.

"Hardly. Would you like to go over the Tombs?"

Clancy shuddered.

"Indeed I wouldn't!"

"No morbid curiosity? I'm glad of that."

"Glad? Why?"

"Oh, well, just because," he blurted.

Clancy looked demurely downward, fixing a button on her glove. For a moment, there was silence. Then Clancy rose to her feet. She held out her hand to Vandervent.

"You've been so kind," she said. "If you'd arrested me for my silly joke, you'd have done to me what I deserved to have happen."

"Not at all," he said. "I feel that—that maybe I scared you when I came in—"

"Not a bit. I was—tired."

"You must let me take you home," he said.

She shook her head.

"I've troubled you enough. Please!"—as he seemed about to insist. "I'm really all right."

He eyed her doubtfully.

"You're sure?"

"Positive."

"All right, then; but—I'd like to."

She became mockingly stern.

"I've interrupted the course of justice enough for one day. Some other time perhaps."

"There'll be another time?" he asked eagerly.

"Well"—she was doubtful—

"I can't promise."

"But we might have luncheon together. Or tea? Or dinner?"

He was flatteringly eager.

"I'll see," said Clancy.

Down-stairs, in the great lobby of the building, she marveled that she had escaped so easily. To have announced herself as Florine Ladue, the woman wanted for Beiner's murder, to have fainted when Vandervent came out, and still to have avoided, by a puerile explanation, all penalties was a piece of good luck that was incredible. She blessed the person unknown who had left the newspaper on the bench. The luckiest of chances had saved her from betrayal. Had she not read of Fanchon's death— She shuddered.

Then her eyes clouded. She had been fighting, with all the wit she owned, for liberty. She had not yet had opportunity to pay to Fanchon's death the tribute of sorrow that it demanded. She had known Fanchon but slightly; the woman was of a class to which Clancy could never belong—a coarse but good-hearted vulgarian. And she had tried to help Clancy in return for little kindnesses that Clancy had shown her when she lay ill with the "flu" in Zenith.

And now this same disease had finally killed the kindly soubrette. Her death had saved Clancy from disgrace—from worse, perhaps, if there is anything worse than disgrace— She suddenly realized how lucky she had been.

She stopped outside to adjust her veil. And she noticed that Spofford, the dyed-mustached gentleman of Vandervent's office, also emerged from the building. She shuddered. If her wit

had not been quick, if she had not remembered, on coming out of her faint, that the item in the paper had removed all danger, his hand might now be clasped about her wrist. Instead of walking toward the subway, she might now be on her way to the Tombs.

Spofford turned south toward the Brooklyn Bridge. She would never, thank God, see him again. For nothing would ever tempt her to the Criminal Courts Building another time. Its shadow would hang over her soul as long as she lived. She had had the narrowest escape that was possible, and she would not tempt fate again.

She would never learn. As her mind ceased to dwell upon the problem of her connection with Beiner's mysterious fate and moved on to consider what she should do with Grannis's ten thousand dollars, it was as though the Beiner incident



The Judge was accompanied by a man. It was Zenda! His recognition was as quick as Clancy's

were forever closed. Clancy had too much Irish in her for trouble to bear down upon her very long. She would never learn that issues are never avoided but must always be met. She was in a congratulatory mood toward herself because Vandervent had not suspected the grim truth behind what she called a jest. She had conquered this difficulty by the aid of fate; fate would help her again to handle the Grannis-Zenda-Weber matter. So she reasoned. It would straighten itself out, she assured herself.

XIX

THERE was a lunch-room on Broadway, just below Eighth Street. Clancy, walking westward from Astor Place, the station at which she emerged from the subway, saw its window-display of not too appetizing appeal, and paused. To-day was Friday; it was quite possible that Sally Henderson would tomorrow give her new employee an advance upon salary. But Clancy had learned something. That something was that New York is not a place in which to reveal one's pecuniary embarrassment. It was not that New York was hard-hearted, Clancy decided. It was that it was a busy place, and had no time to listen to whines. To ask an advance on salary was, in a way, to whine. Clancy was not going to begin her relationship with Sally Henderson on anything but a basis of independence.

So her pause before the lunch-room was only momentary. She entered it immediately. The Trevor was only two hundred yards away, but Clancy had only a pitiful amount of money in her pocket. That is, money that belonged to her. Grannis's ten thousand was not hers. To whom she would give it, she did not yet know, but she did know that she would starve before she used any of it. It might be that Sally Henderson would pay her a half-week's salary to-morrow. She must hope for that. But she must not rely on it. Hence she must live leanly.

This was only her fifth day in New York. It had been her fortune to eat at restaurants of the better class, at a private home. Now, for the first time since her arrival from Zenith, she had opportunity to find out what might have been, what might still be, her lot. Not that the food in the lunch-room was particularly bad. Of its kind, it was rather good. But there was the stain of egg upon the table-cloth; the waiter who served her was unshaven. The dishes in which the food was served were of the heaviest of



Unmindful of the drifts, Randall plowed across the street and joined her. And then Clancy's to drop to some region inches below where it belonged. For, coming round the corner of him was a shorter, slighter person. He was the elevator-man of the Heber-

china. And Clancy was of the sort that prefers indifferent food well served to good food execrably presented.

She paid her check—considering that she had had only corned-beef hash and tea and bread, she thought that sixty cents was an exorbitant charge—tipped the waiter a dime, and trudged out into the storm again.

The snow had ceased falling, but only one so weather-wise as the Maine-bred Clancy would have known that. For the flurries blown by the gale had all the appearance of a continuing blizzard. Bending forward, she made her way to Fifth Avenue, and thence south across Washington Square. Twice, feeling very much alone in the gloom, she made detours to avoid coming too near men whom she observed moving her way. She was yet to learn that, considering its enormous heterogeneous population, New York holds few dangers for the unescorted girl. And so she ran the last few yards, and breathed with relief when the latch-key that Mrs. Gerand had given her admitted her to the lodging-house on the south side of the square.

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The wraith of Florine Ladue was laid. So she believed. And she could find no reason to fear a resurrection. Beiner, who knew her, could recognize her as Florine Ladue, was dead. So was Fanchon DeLisle. Zenda, Grannis, Weber, and the others of the poker-party at Zenda's knew that she called herself "Florine." But it was quite a distance from knowing that a young woman had named herself Florine to proof that the same young woman's last name was Ladue, and that she had visited Morris Beiner's office. Of course—and Clancy's brows knitted at the thought—if there were any legal trouble over the Weber-Zenda-Grannis matter and she testified in court, and Vandervent or Spofford or some other of the district attorney's office heard or saw testimony which involved the fact that she'd used the name "Florine," that person would do some thinking, would wonder how much jesting had been behind her announcement of herself under the name of the woman wanted for the Beiner murder. In that case—

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Why, in that case, she'd be in desperate danger, as great danger as she had been in just before she picked up the paper in Vandervent's anteroom, and the only way out of that danger, without lasting disgrace at the least, would be the production of the real murderer of Morris Beiner.

The real murderer! She drew in her breath with a whistle.

Beiner had been killed; she was suspected. These were facts, and the only facts that she had reckoned with. But the greater fact, though up to now ignored by her, was that *somebody* had killed Beiner. Some one had entered the man's office and slain him, probably as he lay unconscious on the floor. That *somebody* was foot-loose now, perhaps in New York, free from suspicion.

She straightened up, alert, nervous. Suddenly, horror—a horror which fear had managed to keep from her till now—assailed her. A *murderer!* And free! Free to commit other murders! She started as a knock sounded upon the door. And, queerly, she didn't think of the police; she thought of the

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"Old fogey! Why, Judge Walbrough!"

Clancy's tone was rebuking, politely incredulous, amused—everything, in short, that a young girl's voice should be when a man just passing middle age terms himself "old." Walbrough chuckled again.

"Oh, it's a great gift, Miss Deane; never lose it. The young men don't matter. Any girl can catch one of them. But to catch the oldsters like myself—oldsters who know that they can't catch you—that takes genius, Miss Deane."

Clancy laughed.

"Please don't flatter me, Judge. Because, you know, I believe you, and—"

"Sh," said Walbrough. As he uttered the warning, his voice became almost a roar. "The jealous woman might overhear us; she listening in the next room now—"

There was the sound of a scuffle; then came to Clancy's ears the softer voice of Mrs. Walbrough.

"Miss Deane, the senile person who just spoke to you is absurd enough to think that if an old couple—I mean an old man and his young wife—asked you, you'd probably break an engagement with some dashing bachelor and sit with us at the opera."

"I don't know the senile person to whom you refer," retorted Clancy, "but if you and the judge would like me to go, I'd love to, even though I have no engagement to break."

"We won't insist on the breaking, then. Will you run over and dine with us?"

Clancy was astonished. Then she remembered that she had dined rather early at the Broadway lunch-room. It really wasn't more than six-thirty now. People like the Walbroughs, of course, didn't dine until after seven, possibly until eight.

"I won't do that," she answered. "I'd intended to go to bed—it's such a terrible night. And I ate before I came home—but I'd love to come and sit with you," she finished impulsively.

There was something warm, motherly in the older woman's reply.

"And we'd love to have you, Miss Deane. I'll send the car around right away."

Clancy shrugged as she surveyed again her meager wardrobe. But the Walbroughs must know that she lived in a lodging-house—she supposed that they'd obtained her telephone-number and address from Sophie Carey—and the fact that she didn't possess a gorgeous evening gown wouldn't mean much to them, she hoped. And believed, too. For they were most human persons, even if they did, according to Sophie Carey, matter a lot in New York.

Mrs. Gerand was quite breathless when she announced to Clancy, half an hour after the telephone-call, that a big limousine was calling for the newest Gerand lodger. Clancy was already dressed in the pretty foulard that was her only evening frock. Mrs. Gerand solicitously helped her on with her shabby blue coat. Her voice was lowered in awe as she asked:

"It ain't the Walbroughs, is it? The chauffeur said, 'Judge Walbrough's car; but not the judge, is it?'"

"Are there two of them?" laughed Clancy.

Mrs. Gerand shook her head.

"Not that I ever heard of, Miss Deane. But—gee, you got swell friends, ain't you?"

Clancy laughed again.

"Have I?"

"I'll say you have," said Mrs. Gerand.

The Walbrough home was on Murray Hill, though Clancy didn't know at the time that the section of the city directly south of the Grand Central Station was so named. It was not a new house, and it looked as though it was lived in—something that cannot always be said of New York homes, whether in apartment-buildings or in single houses. It was homey in the sense that the houses in Zenith were homey. And, even though a colored man in evening clothes opened the front door, and though a colored maid relieved Clancy of her coat, Clancy felt, from the moment that she passed the threshold, that she was in a home.

Her host met her at the top of a flight of stairs. His great hands enveloped hers. They drew her toward him. Before she knew it, he had kissed her. And Clancy did the thing that made two admiring acquaintances adoring friends for life. She kissed the judge warmly in return. For Mrs. Walbrough was standing a trifle behind the judge, although Clancy hadn't seen her. She came forward now, wringing her hands with a would-be pathetic expression on her face.

"I can't trust the man a moment, Miss Deane. And, to make it worse, I find that I can't trust you." She drew Clancy close to her. She, too, kissed the girl, and found the kiss returned.

"Why shouldn't I kiss him?" demanded Clancy. "He brags so much, I wanted to find out if he knew how."

"Does he?" asked Mrs. Walbrough.

Clancy's eyes twinkled.

"Well, you see," she answered, "I'm not really a judge myself."

The judge exploded in a huge guffaw.

"With eyes like hers, Irish gray eyes, why shouldn't she have wit? Tell me, Miss Deane: You have Irish blood in you?"

"My first name is Clancy," replied the girl.

"Enough," said the judge. He heaved a great mock sigh.

"Now, if only Martha would catch a convenient cold or headache—"

Mrs. Walbrough tapped him with an ostrich-plume fan.

"Tom, Miss Deane is our guest. Please stop annoying her. The suggestion that she should spend an hour alone with you must be horrifying to any young lady. Come."

The judge gave an arm to each of the ladies, and they walked, with much stateliness on the part of the judge, to a dining-room that opened off the landing at the head of the stairs.

Clancy felt happier than she had deemed it possible for her to be. Perhaps the judge's humor was a little crude; perhaps it was even stupid. But to be with two people who so evidently liked her, and who so patently adored each other, was to partake of their happiness, no matter how desperate her own fears.

Dinner passed quickly enough, and Clancy found out that she had an appetite after all. The judge and his wife showed no undue interest in her. Clancy would have sworn that they knew nothing about her when dinner ended and they started for the opera. She did not know that, before he went upon the bench, Judge Walbrough had been the cleverest cross-examiner at the bar, and that all through dinner he had been verifying his first estimate of her character. For the Walbroughs, as she was later to learn, did not "pick up" every lovely young female whom they chanced to meet and admire. A happy couple, they still were lonely at times—lonely for the sound of younger voices.

And the significant glance that the judge cast at his wife at the end of the dinner went unnoticed by Clancy. She did not know that they had passed upon her and found her worth while.

And with this friendly couple she heard her first opera. It was "Manon," and Farrar sang. From the beginning to the tragic dénouement, Clancy was held enthralled. She was different from the average country girl who attends the opera. She was not at all interested in the persons, though they were personages, who were in the boxes. She was interested in the singers, and in them only. She had never heard great music before, save from a phonograph. She made a mental vow that she would hear more again—soon.

XX

THE judge and his wife were true music-lovers and didn't attend the opera for social reasons. Nevertheless, they knew, seemingly, every one of importance in the artistic, financial, professional, and social world. During the entr'actes, the judge pointed out to Clancy persons with whom he was acquainted. Ordinarily, Clancy would have been thrilled at the mere sight of the demigods and goddesses. To-night, they left her cold. Yet, out of courtesy, she professed interest.

"And there's my little friend Darcy," she heard the judge say.

She roused herself from abstraction, an abstraction in which she was mentally reviewing the acting and singing of the superb Farrar.

"Who is he?" she asked.

The judge smiled.

"Munitions. Used to live in Pennsylvania. Now he dwelleth in the Land of Easy Come."

For a second, her thoughts far away, Clancy did not get the implication. Then she replied,

"But I thought that the munitions millionaires made so much that they found it hard to get rid of it."

"This is a wonderful town, Miss Deane. It affords opportunity for everyone and everything. No man ever made money so fast that New York couldn't take it away from him. If the ordinary methods are not sufficient, some brilliant New Yorker will invent something new. And they're inventing them for Darcy—and ten thousand other Darcys, too."

Clancy stared at the squat little millionaire a few seats away.

"He doesn't look very brilliant," she announced.

"He isn't," said the judge.

"But he's worth millions," protested Clancy.

"That doesn't prove brilliance. It proves knack and tenacity. That's all," said her host. "Some of the (Continued on page 105)

Most of the folks in our office think this is the best story that Jack Boyle, author of the "Boston Blackie" stories, ever wrote.

Boomerang Bill

Illustrated by
Lee Conrey

IN San Francisco's Plymouth Square, East and West rub shoulders on a thumb-nail patch of neutral territory that, racially, is No Man's Land. Above the tiny park, within a block, lies Chinatown, a transplanted bit of the Orient—an alien city of queer, pungent odors, of slippered feet that move soundlessly, of shy, yellow faces that peep furtively from high windows, barred and curtained—a city that exhales an atmosphere of mystery well kept from white men's eyes. Below Plymouth Square and within a block of it lies Kearny Street—the Occident—a busy thoroughfare abum with the turmoil of the white man's business done in the white man's way. But in Plymouth Square, East and West meet and mingle on the benches that line the graveled walks and exchange curious, half-suspicious glances.

Into the park from the Orient's domain came a white man—or what once had been a white man. Shabby clothes flapped grotesquely about his shriveled body. The contaminating mark of the East betrayed itself in his shuffling gait, and in the waxy pallor of his face, and in his eyes, which were those of a man who had slipped grievously on Life's road and then, by chance, found a compensating substitute for all that the world holds good and worth while. From a strap across his shoulders hung a tray filled with shoe-laces, pencils, and the trashy wares of a street-peddler become more than half-mendicant. At his side trudged a child, a tiny Chinese girl, who clung to his hand and looked into his face with hero-worshipping eyes set aslant as she chattered volubly in the jargon of her race. At the heels of the two followed a black-and-yellow mongrel dog, which looked up at them now and then, also with loving, hero-worshipping eyes, and would have chattered, too, if it could.

"Boomerang Bill!" exclaimed a well-dressed youth, nudging the arm of Boston Blackie, who sat beside him on a park bench. "Poor broken-down old bum, peddling pencils for a jitney a throw! I hear he lives in Eye You's old den in the alley, along with the Chink's little girl and yellow dog, since the old man died. Bill looks like he's turned half-Chink himself, don't he? And they say



"Boomerang Bill! I hear he lives in Eye You's old den, along with the Chink's little girl and yellow dog, since the old man died"

Boomerang Bill

he was once a real crook. Lord, they musta broke his nerve right over at Quentin Prison to have brought him to this! Did you know him in the old days when he was all white, Blackie?"

"Did I know him?" As Boston Blackie repeated the question, reel after reel of swiftly moving pictures unfolded before him. The characters in them lived and moved, and spoke again as once, in reality, they had lived, moved, spoken, and loved. And this is the resurrected drama of the past that was relived in Boston Blackie's memory as he paused after the question:

Boomerang Bill's social debut in San Francisco was superlatively auspicious or supremely unfortunate, according to the view-point, but none could deny that it was spectacular. A stranger in the city, he was sauntering along Hayes Street one evening during that bygone period of the city's history when bright lights burned brightest just before sunup and prohibition was a mythical killjoy. Bill was lonely, a stranger in an unfriendly land, longing for the familiar faces and squalid turmoil of New York's East Side, from which he was an exile. The melancholy wanderer's nostalgia was interrupted by strains of dance-music—the blatantly syncopated sort of strains to which he was used on Saturday nights in his district Tammany club. Bill's eyes rose longingly to the second-story windows of the dance-hall, ablaze with light and gay with cotton bunting. Below the hall was a saloon. That, too, suggested home to Bill. Over the doorway was a huge sign on which he read, "Hayes Valley Democratic Club."

"I'm a Tammany Democrat, and all Democrats, East or West, are brothers. I'll step inside and give me 'Frisco pals and their girls the double O," decided Bill.

He bought a ticket, climbed the stairs, entered the hall, and found himself at once the objective of two hundred pairs of curious eyes.

Sixty seconds convinced Boomerang Bill of the utter fallacy of his theory of the universal brotherhood of Democrats. Unconcealed hostility, innate as a dog's at first sight of a canine stranger, met Bill's gaze from two-score masculine eyes as he slowly and nonchalantly surveyed the room. A box-barrage of quick, half-shielded feminine glances betrayed excited interest, wonder, and suppressed admiration for the bold stranger who had appeared, uninvited and unexplained, in the stronghold of Larry McQuade's Boo Gang. Besides, Bill was good to look upon. Thick of chest, heavy of hand, and bold and unfearing of eye, he was one in whom each feminine appraiser in the room recognized a potential knight whose chosen "steady" would never lack a protecting fist when one was needed.

Bill read the divided verdict he faced as clearly as if it had been spoken. His spirits rose, and unobtrusively he tightened his belt. Not seeking trouble, he was, nevertheless, prepared for it. For the first time since he had become an exile from the East Side, he felt at home.

The dance came to an end, and then, instantly, a pair of provocative black eyes precipitated the inevitable battle, gave Bill his name, and won him lasting Hayes Valley celebrity. Naturally, the eyes were those of a girl. With deliberate purpose, she smiled at Bill as her partner seated her on the bench encircling the hall. All the perverse impishness of a born mischief-maker lay behind that smile. Bill smiled back, but made no move. The girl's scowling courtier asked for the next dance.

"I've promised it," she answered, loud enough for Bill to overhear, and again her too red lips parted alluringly in the direction of his corner. The music began, leaving her the one girl in the hall not dancing. Once again she looked toward Bill, and the look was both an invitation and a challenge.

"I dare you," it said.

Bill accepted the challenge—without illusions. He was not anxious to fight, and even less anxious to dance; but a dare is a dare, and the reputation of the East Side rested on his shoulders.

"May I have the pleasure?" he mumbled perfunctorily, crossing over to the side of the temptress. With a mocking smile toward her enraged escort, the girl slipped into Bill's arms, and then began the dance which led, by a long and devious trail, to old Eye You's den in Chinatown.

Bill was a gruff and ungracious partner. He knew that the last strains of the music meant instant battle without quarter in which he would be one against a hundred. Man after man bumped into Bill, who returned bump for bump imperturbably as his eyes roamed the hall and appraised its strategic possibilities for the unequal conflict to follow. At last, in a corner near the stairway, he found what he sought.

The music stopped. The girls flocked precipitately to far corners of the hall. Bill escorted his partner to her seat.

"Thanks for the chanc to do to your man what he ought to do to you," he said, and backed into the corner near the doorway, from which he faced a narrowing circle of Boo Gang warriors.

The swarthy youth whose proprietary rights to the black-eyed enchantress had been so wantonly ignored crossed to the corner where Bill lounged seemingly at ease.

"Why don't you learn to step before you ask a lady on the floor, you big hick?" he demanded. The crowd behind him edged forward, shutting off escape by the stairway. Bill eyed his antagonist calmly and with mock surprise.

"Step! Me? This is the way the Tammany Democrats step in little ol' Noo Yawk."

With the speed of a striking python, Bill's right hand shot out as he spoke and caught the challenger by the throat in a vise-like grip. The crowd surged toward him. With his left hand, he reached behind him and turned off the electric-light switch. Then—bedlam.

Cries, groans, and curses intermingled. One of the big front windows crashed to bits as a man was hurled bodily through it. He struck the first-floor awning and bounced off to the sidewalk. In the hall, the combat raged furiously. The advantage lay with Bill, notwithstanding the odds against him, for in darkness, where he had no friends, he could strike free-handed without fear of hitting one. The rest were handicapped by the necessity of locating the one enemy among a hundred allies. Finally, some one found the electric switch and the hall again was flooded with light. It revealed the Hayes Valley Democratic Club dance as a gory spectacle. Half a dozen men were on the floor. A dozen others were mopping bleeding lips and eyes already discolored by the dark hues of defeat. Bill was gone.

"He's beat it, the lucky stiff!" cried some one, as the uninjured helped the casualties to tottering feet.

"Where's Tony the Wop?" demanded another of the groaning and maimed fighters. "His girl started this muss."

"That new guy threw him through the window—clean through into the street," answered an excited feminine voice.

A bruised and badly disheveled Tony staggered up the stairs. In an instant, the dark-eyed one whose faithlessness had furnished the *casus belli* was at his side, whispering soothing endearments as she gave first aid to his wounds with a skill that bespoke previous experience.

"Some scrapper, that bird!" suggested one whose collar was missing and whose coat hung in tatters about his waist. "He packs a Jim Jeffries in both coat sleeves, I'll say."

"And I'll say I'll get him, and get him right if he stays in 'Frisco," added Tony the Wop.

The excited babble of voices died out suddenly. All eyes turned toward the doorway. In it stood Bill, disheveled, but his eyes aglow with joyous battle-light.

"Here I am," he challenged. "Who's next? I'm Fift' Street Bill, of the Smoky Hogan gang, from Noo Yawk. Any gent that's curious about the rest of me history can step up and get it gratis."

The effrontery of the lone stranger's reappearance stunned the crowd into inaction. No one moved. Once, twice, Bill's eyes ranged the hushed circle he faced. Then, with a smile of conscious victory, he slowly backed down the stairway. Still bathing the battered face of Tony the Wop, the dark-eyed girl smiled again over her shoulder with wanton mischief into the face of the slowly retreating gladiator. They never saw each other again.

The Boo Gang stalwarts appreciated valor, even in an enemy. "Fift' Street Bill!" ejaculated one, in frank admiration. "That ain't no name for that guy. The harder you hit him the quicker he comes back. 'Boomerang Bill' had oughta be his name."

Thenceforth, Fifth Street Bill, of New York, became Boomerang Bill, of San Francisco.

What Fate's three capricious spinners began at the Hayes Valley Club dance, through the aid of a tantalizing pair of black eyes, they continued just in front of "Sam's Place—Quick Eats," with the aid of a damp match and an unlighted cigar.

Within a week of Boomerang Bill's tempestuous evening with his Democratic brothers, he found himself heartily tired of San Francisco, and longing, only as such as he can long, for the familiar haunts and faces of the East Side streets that were home to him. It was while he was dining, solitary and lugubrious, in Sam's Place that he decided a return to the tenement blocks of his dreams was worth its risk.

"I'll grab a rattler to-night," he decided, thrilling with the joy of immediate action. "If them Pinkertons still want to pinch

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Why do you follow me home each evening?" demanded Annabel May, with the defensive hostility that is woman's natural armor

me, let 'em. I'll take me chances. I'll pack me keister and blow. This burg oughta be decorated—with crape."

Bill finished his dinner hurriedly, bought a cigar as he paid his check, and stepped into the street, unconsciously humming Tammany's rallying-song. Then he produced his last match—a damp one—to light his cigar. The match fizzed, sputtered, but failed to ignite. He turned back into the restaurant for another one, walking over to the tiny cage behind whose brass railing the restaurant cashier sat.

"Slip me a bit of fire, will you—" As he looked up, quick perception stifled the carelessly familiar "kiddo" which had been on his lips. Within the minute, the buxom Venus of the day-shift

to whom he had paid his check had disappeared. In her place was a girl whose gray-blue eyes, looking into his interrogatively, reminded him, though he did not know why, of the quaint old Irish fairy-tales of helpless and lovely princesses with which he had been valiantly thrilled at his mother's knee. Slender and dainty and elfin, she seemed to him all a princess should be.

"You wanted?" she asked.

"A match, please—if you don't mind, miss," stammered Boomerang Bill. She handed him a box and went on ringing up checks and making change.

Boomerang Bill returned to his hotel and paid another week's room-rent. He didn't even remember he had intended to start

Boomerang Bill

forthwith for New York. That night, he dreamed a fairy-tale in which an elfin princess with gray-blue eyes cried out to him to rescue her from a man dragon with the face of Tony the Wop.

As he lounged about his room the next day, restless and dissatisfied, Boomerang Bill was frankly amazed at himself. He had made rough love to many girls of many kinds, but prided himself on invulnerability against feminine wiles. But now, with an elfin face and the lurking appeal of a pair of gray-blue eyes suddenly altering the current of his life, he found a new longing gradually taking definite form in the background of his imagination. It was for a cottage, vine-covered, with a tiny garden, gay-colored with blossoming flowers, while in the doorway there waited—for him—that some one so manifestly misplaced in the cashier's cage of "Sam's Place—Quick Eats." Boomerang Bill scowled angrily into his mirror.

"I must be getting nutty!" he ejaculated. "She's no girl for a crook."

She wasn't, which, to those who can understand, explains why Bill, lifelong denizen of tenement slums, for the first time in his life envisioned a vine-covered cottage and wondered how some men managed to earn an honest living. The truth is, though he would have denied it belligerently, that Boomerang Bill was a gangster and hold-up man only because he had had but small chance to be anything else. Somewhere deep in his slum-dwarfed nature lay the hitherto dormant impulses of a home-maker and a home-lover which had descended to him from ancestors who had loved and fought for their thatched cottages on the edge of Irish peat-bogs—cottages poor in architecture but rich in the wealth of barefoot babes that played about their doors. Without in the least understanding, Bill felt this instinctive call with surprised exasperation.

"That dame's getting on my nerves," he complained crossly. "I'll stay away from that eating-house joint of hers."

Having satisfied himself with this resolve, he went for a long walk which ended in front of Sam's Place at the precise moment at which the girl of the elfin face and strangely appealing eyes appeared in the cashier's cage. At once, Bill realized he was hungry. He went in for his dinner.

Two nights later, Annabel May returned from her work shortly after midnight to find her mother waiting for her, as usual, in the least bare of their two "light housekeeping" rooms. There was a new expression on the girl's face on this night—an expression that reflected a mind divided between troubled concern and welcome expectancy.

"What's worrying you, daughter?" the wan-faced mother asked.

"I was wondering—" the girl replied, and paused. Then: "A man followed me home last night and again to-night. He keeps on the opposite side of the street, but I know he follows me. He's the one, I think, who eats at the restaurant twice an evening and looks at me so strangely each time he pays his checks."

"You must call a policeman!" exclaimed her mother, in alarm.

"No, no; you misunderstand. He never looks at me like that," the daughter contradicted. "That's why I wonder—"

"Wonder what, child?"

"Why he follows me at all."

Being unable, or possibly unwilling, to answer her own question, and finding herself persistently followed each evening, Annabel May convinced herself that propriety—secretly abetted by curiosity—required that she ask it of Boomerang Bill himself. Crossing the street suddenly one night, as he followed on the opposite sidewalk, the girl faced Bill beneath the flare of a corner drug store's lights. She had chosen the spot strategically, for, with womanly intuition, she wished to look into his face as she asked her question. Surprised in the midst of a wide-awake dream in which he was buying furniture with lordly prodigality for the vine-covered cottage, Boomerang Bill awkwardly dragged off his hat and stood before her as shamedfacedly as a schoolboy interrupted in the act of writing his first love-poem on a slate.

"Why do you follow me home each evening?" demanded Annabel May, with the defensive hostility that is woman's natural armor.

Under the fixed stare of her eyes, which never left his face,

Boomerang Bill was as helpless as a babe. He stammered, reddened until his face matched the fiery color of his hair, and then wisely told the truth.

"Because—because I wanted—that is, I didn't want—" Floundering hopelessly, the gunman dragged himself back to coherency with a mighty effort. "A bunch of those Boo Gang boys hang out round these corners, and I wanted to be close up in case any of 'em ever tried to get fresh when you're going home alone." As he explained, his big fists clenched unconsciously.

Looking into his eyes, the girl's doubts—they had never been more than tiny ones—were removed. The rigid hostility of her face softened and vanished. It was just what she had hoped to hear; for a hundred and eighty pounds of belligerently protective and reverentially respectful masculinity is the one sure



"Annie, what's wrong?" he cried.

remedy for the trying defenselessness that tests the courage of unsheltered girls like Annabel May. She smiled up at him, ingeniously delighted.

"That's just what I hoped you would say!" she exclaimed, with happy thoughtlessness, and then, realizing the extent of this admission, she turned hurriedly and recrossed the street—without Boomerang Bill by her side. They were before her door before either was aware of it.

"Good-night," said the girl, shyly offering her hand.

"Good-night," stammered Bill, seizing it between two big but trembling paws. Had he known how such things were done, he would have knelt and kissed the little fingers within his as handsome and graceful heroes always did in the old-fashioned melodramas he loved. Not having the temerity to do this, he escaped into the darkness and pressed his own hand at the spot

where hers had touched it to his lips. To this had a pair of gray-blue eyes so quickly reduced Boomerang Bill, one-time gunman of the New York slums.

From that night, life for Boomerang Bill was divided into two parts—sharply and painfully. Before four (when Annabel May took charge of the restaurant cash-register), he was just a big, honest-eyed Irish boy who chatted gaily with her tired-faced mother, answered the girl's every glance with shy, reverential eyes, and never guessed that the one "easy" chair in their shabby rooms was hardly more comfortable than the top of a fire-hydrant. On some days—the red-letter ones—he and Annabel May took long jaunts through Golden Gate Park or to Ocean Beach, where they ate lunch among the rocks and, hand in hand, built queer make-believe houses in the sand like the care-free

a time when Boomerang Bill was a skilful and methodically careful worker at the trade chosen for him by his environment. Street-piracy had been a remunerative, wholly easy, and pleasantly exciting employment.

He found now, with honest perplexity, that days with Annabel May, in which his first vague, shadowy dreams of a home gradually assumed form and substance, were a poor mental preparation for planning a drug-store hold-up by night. When he should have been studying a store's possibilities from the view-point of an industrious crook, he found his eyes and mind wandering involuntarily to the windows of some near-by furniture store which displayed the complete furnishings of a model four room-apartment—price three hundred dollars, pay as you please. Before he knew it, he would find himself "window-shopping" for furniture with a zest that comes once in a lifetime to men—and women—who are fortunate, and never to those who are not.

Also, Bill came to realize, with shocked surprise, that, being a crook, his chiefest pride in the old East Side days was rapidly becoming his bitterest regret. He hated to live a lie before the frank, credulous, urgently appealing eyes of Annabel May, but to tell

her the truth was to lose her. Of that he was sure. He had never feared the power of the law, but he did fear mightily the verdict he knew he would read in the girl's eyes if she ever learned the truth. Given time, those eyes would have turned Boomerang Bill from the easy but risky life of a bachelor crook to the harder but safer one of an honest man buying a home on the instalment plan. But Fate, who, when she chooses, always holds the highest trump, intervened—and did so at the beach.

All day, Annabel May had been grave and strangely preoccupied. Raising himself suddenly from his sandy bed at her side, Boomerang Bill surprised on her face the haunted look of a friendless child confronting a new and terrifying danger.

"Annie, what's wrong?" he cried, in quick alarm. "Tell me, dear."

There were tears and beseeching appeal in her eyes as she turned toward him. "Mother," she said. "Mother?"

"Yes. The doctor was at the house again to-day. He left her medicine, and said her cough will soon be better. Somehow, I felt that he didn't mean it. I went to his office before I met you and asked him to tell me the truth. He said—" Her lips trembled, and she made a gesture of utter, poignant hopelessness.

"He said what, dearest?" Boomerang Bill was unconscious of the endearing term he had never until now dared to venture.

"He said she will die soon if we stay here. The hot, dry climate of Arizona is the only hope. Both lungs are affected."

Quite as unconsciously as he had called her "dearest," Bill drew the girl into his arms, where she lay unresisting, sobbing against his shoulder. To Boomerang Bill, gangster, this was the first and happiest of three great moments he was to know in a lifetime.

"Poor little girl—poor little sweetheart!" he murmured comfortingly, stroking her hair with a big but gentle hand that surprised him by its temerity. "You and mother shall start for the desert country at once," he promised her. "In a few months, she'll be well—I'm sure of it. Don't cry, please, little one; there's nothing to trouble you now."

"We can't. I may not be able to get work there, and we can't even afford the railway fare."

(Continued on page 125)



in quick alarm. "Tell me, dear"

children they were—for the moment. During these hours, Boomerang Bill, the gunman, simply did not exist. And then, at four, when he surrendered his comrade to the cashier's cage at Sam's Place, life, with all its sordid necessities, surged over him again, overwhelmingly demolishing the dreams of his better hours as the surf at high tide demolished the abandoned play-houses in the sand. After four, in a word, Bill became again Boomerang Bill, a man exiled with reason from his home town.

As the weeks passed, however, and the daily comradeship of Annabel May became more and more the one insistent demand of his nature, Bill discovered, with growing perplexity, that the pre-four phase of his dual life was subtly overlapping and intermingling with the hitherto easy matter of keeping money in his pockets by the simple East Side expedient of finding some one who had it and taking it at the point of a gun-muzzle. There had been



Are You a Coward?

If so, it may not be your fault.

By Woods Hutchinson

Photographic Decorations by A. P. Milne

COURAGE is and ever has been the price of life. Existence is just one scare after another, and readiness to face dangers, to take a chance, is absolutely necessary to its continuance. As some philosopher has lamented, this world is a mighty dangerous place, and few of us ever get out of it alive.

Should we not expect to find some special provision for courage in our physical framework, some chemical basis for the display and support of bravery in our bodily make-up?

Broadly considered, it is probably a mistake to suppose that war throws a heavier strain upon our courage than peace. It is of a slightly different character and more concentrated in spots, so to speak, but, on the total average, not more severe. Even the most peaceful of means of earning a living involves facing and becoming indifferent to heavy risks.

For instance, the great "Safety First" organizations have collected statistics showing that, during the years of the great world-war, more American lives were lost by accident at home than on all the battle-fields of France—one hundred and twenty-six thousand against forty-seven thousand!

Perilous as is the adventure of life to-day, it was even deadlier in the past—in the Middle Ages, for instance, when the whole of Europe was one vast armed camp, or, rather, half camp, half pest-house; in Colonial times, with ever-present watchfulness against Indian arrows and the pinch of famine; even more recently, in pioneer days on the frontier.

If our ancestors had not had high and dauntless courage, none of us would be here, for they couldn't have survived long enough

to leave descendants. Nor is the inheritance of courage only on the male side; the mothers of the race ran two-thirds of the risks that our fathers did and faced them just as dauntlessly, as well as special perils of their own. It is an item of grim significance and wide bearing that the death-rate among women, in the earliest days after the landing of the Pilgrims, was fifty-five per cent. in the first two years. More blood has been shed in the birth-chamber than on the battle-field, and maternal courage is the very cause of our individual existence.

The quiet calmness with which Red Cross nurses and women war-workers faced every risk of shot and shell to care for the wounded or the helpless committed to their charge was as inborn and as heroic as any dash or daredeviltry which won the Victoria Cross or the Distinguished Service Medal.

That courage is by right one of the inborn traits of normal men and women was strikingly proved by the flaming ordeal of war when it burst upon us; it only developed and brought out into high and glorious relief the quiet and unassuming capacity for signal bravery which had always existed and been kept alive daily in times of peace.

It was little cause for surprise that the fell happenings of the past four years so overwhelmingly answered the question: Are all men brave? From the heliograph of ten million living bayonets flashed the reply, "Yes; all men are brave when it comes to the test." Never was a war fought with such an astounding fewness of panic-retreats, of needless inglorious surrenders; ground was gained not by the mile but by the yard, and every foot fiercely contested inch by inch.

Yet out of these millions of brave men, every one was afraid, felt fear, not merely once or twice, but scores and hundreds of times. Twice-decorated heroes frankly assured me that every shell of a certain type or above a certain size "put the wind up" them, and that they quaked inwardly every time that a push was ordered; but they went forward just the same.

Why is this curious contradiction—that men of unquestioned courage, men whom everybody knows and who know themselves to be brave, are frightened first and even tremble at the thought of danger? Part of this advance-fear is purely mental and imaginative—the dread that, although your courage has always stood by you so far, next time it may possibly fail you, the fear of fear, as it has been termed, and which is no disgrace, but a compliment, rather, to one's intelligence. As a winner of the Victoria Cross at the Somme paradoxically remarked, "I think it an insult to call a man fearless; I would rather be called brainless."

Of course, everyone knows that true courage consists not in feeling no fear but in overcoming the fear that you feel, and may be even compelled to show in spite of yourself. For one of the worst things about mental risk is that when men are getting ready in their minds and souls to behave with signal bravery, their bodies may present half or even most of the physical signs of fear. It's bad enough to be frightened; but why should it be necessary to act as if you were scared to death?

Of late years, a flood of light has been thrown upon these strange contradictions by experimental studies in the laboratory of the bodily changes accompanying fear and fighting-courage—with the somewhat surprising but consoling result of proving that most of them are as purely involuntary as breathing or sneezing, and are really beneficial, in spite of their distressingness, in the sense that they prepare the body to survive the danger either by attack or by escape.

The surface-signs of these two great emotions, fear and rage, are so well known in both ourselves and in animals that it is hardly necessary to describe them. Paleness, trembling, and twitching of the limbs, erection of the hair, quick or gasping breathing, twitching of the lips—all form the familiar picture of fear.

There is nothing that looks preparatory or helpful about these signs; all they seem to do is to advertise to your enemies that you are afraid of them. What earthly advantage could be in that is hardly to be imagined. But when we look into the depths of the body, so to speak, and study

the muscles and great vital organs themselves, we find that this mere surface-play is an indication of real and wonderfully intelligent preparations for escape or protection which are taking place within us.

Not only so, but there is a special organ or gland, which has the oversight and direction of these changes, known, from the fact that it lies just above, or on, the kidney, as the adrenal, or suprarenal, gland ("renal" meaning "of the kidney"). This is an insignificant, crumpled-up little body about the size of a small drop-cake or hermit cookie, which nevertheless appears to be the "emergency man" or "breakdown gang" for the entire body. In times of peace, it pours into the blood a juice, or secretion, called adrenalin, which helps to control and apportion the blood-supply to the different organs of the body.

But when the danger-signal is flashed in from either eye or ear, this little gland becomes a dynamo of wonder-working power. It pours into the blood within twenty or thirty seconds a stream of adrenalin which swiftly courses all through the body and takes charge of the situation as a general does of a battle. One of its first effects is to cause the blood-vessels of the great vital organs of the abdomen, the stomach, the liver, and the intestines, to squeeze or contract down, and thus drive the blood out of these regions into the great muscles, the heart, the lungs, and the brain. This is why digestion stops at once as soon as either fear or rage begins.

Next, or, indeed, almost at the same time, it issues order to the body storehouse of sugar, the liver, to promptly melt and set afloat in the blood-stream supplies of this great sinew of war of the body for fighting-purposes, thus furnishing a quick-burning fuel for the muscles and for the heart. So striking are these changes that in a frightened or infuriated animal the muscles of the limbs are distinctly swollen and enlarged, while the abdomen is diminished in size.

In the chemistry of courage, one priceless substance plays a major part, and that is sugar. We have heard much of "sweetness and light," but this is a case of sweetness and fight, not of "sweets to the sweet" but of "sweets to the brave." The body actually hoards sugar in the liver for such emergencies, though with little risk of indictment for profiteering. There was the soundest scientific basis for our saving sugar in our homes in order to send it to our soldiers. Only, of course, it isn't cane-sugar or beet-sugar which comes pouring through our blood into our muscles to furnish fuel (Continued on page 141)



Star-Dust

*The people in the life of Lily Becker
and her daughter*



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Lily turned the knob of his office door
and entered

LILY BECKER, of St. Louis, from childhood has dreamed of glorious dreams of achievement. She wants to be a great singer. She hates her commonplace environment, yet her will has not been strong enough to break its chains. When only eighteen, she permits her dull, ordinary parents to marry her to dull, ordinary Albert Penny, a hardware salesman. In a month she revolts, and disappears without a trace. Freedom to work out her career she must have. She arrives in New York with a few hundred dollars, and illusion after illusion begins to vanish. A promising vaudeville engagement ends abruptly on the unwelcome advances of Robert Visigoth, proprietor of a great circuit. Then comes the discovery that in a few months she will be a mother. These months are filled with tragic happenings. She is turned out of her living-place; another position is lost; her voice is tested by a famous opera conductor and found wanting; most of her money is stolen, and finally, in the public ward of a hospital, a baby girl is born. She calls it Zoë, to her "the most beautiful name in the world—it means 'free.'"

Lily resolves that her child will have every chance to attain what she has missed. But the problem of existence is a difficult one. After a desperate struggle, she goes to Robert Visigoth and asks for work. She gets it, but not before paying a price, about which, in view of the stake she is playing for, she can feel no remorse. Her work is in the office, and her efficiency brings her to the head of the booking department. With Mrs. Blair, also in the office, she forms a great friendship. This woman, out of a tragic early experience, has written a play, in which Lily has great faith. Finally, Robert's brother Erucce, who, by this time, is in love with Lily, agrees to produce it, and he gives her an interest in it.

Lily and Zoë for some years have been making their home with Mrs. Schum, with whom she and her parents boarded in St. Louis when she was a little girl. Mrs. Schum has come to New York on account of her grandson, Harry Calvert, who is a kleptomaniac, and whose petty thievery had gotten him into trouble at home. From her, Lily gets the first real news of her family. Her husband has prospered, and he and her father are in business together. Before Lily can realize it, Zoë is almost through high school. She has been accepted, by Triest, a famous singing teacher, as a pupil.

Mrs. Blair's play, "Who Did It?" is produced, and attains success. Lily's interest in the venture brings in sufficient money to make them comfortable, and all goes well until Mrs. Schum has a stroke. While she lies dying in a hospital, Harry steals a ring, which he tries, with protestations of love, to force on Lily, and when the police come to arrest him, he blows out his brains. Mrs. Schum, on her death-bed, convinces Lily that it is her duty to get in touch with her husband and parents. She does so. They are starting on a trip to Washington, and send word that they will come on by way of New York. Zoë's existence is unknown to them until they arrive. Albert Penny insists that his daughter go back with him, but Lily begs strenuously for the completion of the girl's musical education, and offers to take up her own life with him again if he will let Zoë, properly looked after, remain in New York. To this arrangement, Albert, again carried away by Lily's charm, consents. He may have to go to France on war-work.

XLII

ALBERT did not sail. A certain depression seemed to settle over him one evening, after they had dined at a Broadway restaurant and were spending the interim before theater in the lobby of the Hudson, where Mrs. Becker never tired of observing and commenting upon the transient swirl and peacockery.

"Look at that tight skirt, will you? It's a shame for any self-respecting woman to have to look at it, much less wear it."

"Tippy dear, not so loud."

"Look at that low-cut back, will you? And white hair, too! I wouldn't live in this town if you gave it to me. Sixty cents

(PERRY, 1925, BY INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE CO. "ANY

Fannie Hurst's *novel*
of two generations of
American girls

Illustrated by
James Montgomery Flagg

for string-beans the menu read to-night. If I had been alone, I know what I would have done. Walked out. It's only for millionaires here. You should thank your stars you have a home to go to, Lily, instead of you and Zoë crying over each other all day. If I had my say, she would go, too. Education! St. Louis education is good enough for anybody."

"I think we had better be going," said Lily, leaning forward to tilt Zoë's hat further down over her face. "I don't want you to miss the first act."

There was to be a box for "Who Did It?" and a visit behind the scenes between acts.

From where he sat, with crossed knees and his nicely polished shoes far out, so that passers-by were forced to a small detour, Albert looked suddenly across at his mother-in-law, rather scaredly white.

"Mother," he said, "I've got a pain in my chest."

On the instant, her rosiness blanched.

"Albert, one of your colds coming on? They never start on your chest. It's influenza—the papers are full of it. They say next winter we're going to have it in a terrible epidemic. Albert, what hurts?"

He inserted two fingers into the front plait of his shirt.

"It hurts here," he said.

"Albert," cried Mrs. Becker, instantly taken with panic, "let me feel if you have any fever!"

"Now, now, Carrie; don't create a scene here in the lobby," said Mr. Becker. "You've nursed him through enough colds not to be alarmed."

"But in his chest! It's a symptom, I tell you—the papers are full of it!"

"Nonsense, Carrie! It's probably a little indigestion. On the way to the theater, we'll stop in at a drug store."

"Theater! Don't even mention the word. Come up-stairs, Albert. Ben, you rush over to the drug store for some camphorated oil. Albert, do you feel achy?"

Lily laid out a quietly firm hand on his arm.

"Mamma, please—let Albert get a word in."

"I know that boy like a book. He looks feverish."

"Albert," said Lily, holding to the sedative quality in her voice, "do you feel ill?"

"I've a pain in my chest," he persisted doggedly, and with the drawn look about his mouth whitening.

They put him to bed. By nine o'clock, a slight flush lay on Albert's cheek and he kept feeling of his brow.

"I think I have fever," he said once, always in a scared, white manner. "Look in the paper and see if dry lips is one of the symptoms."

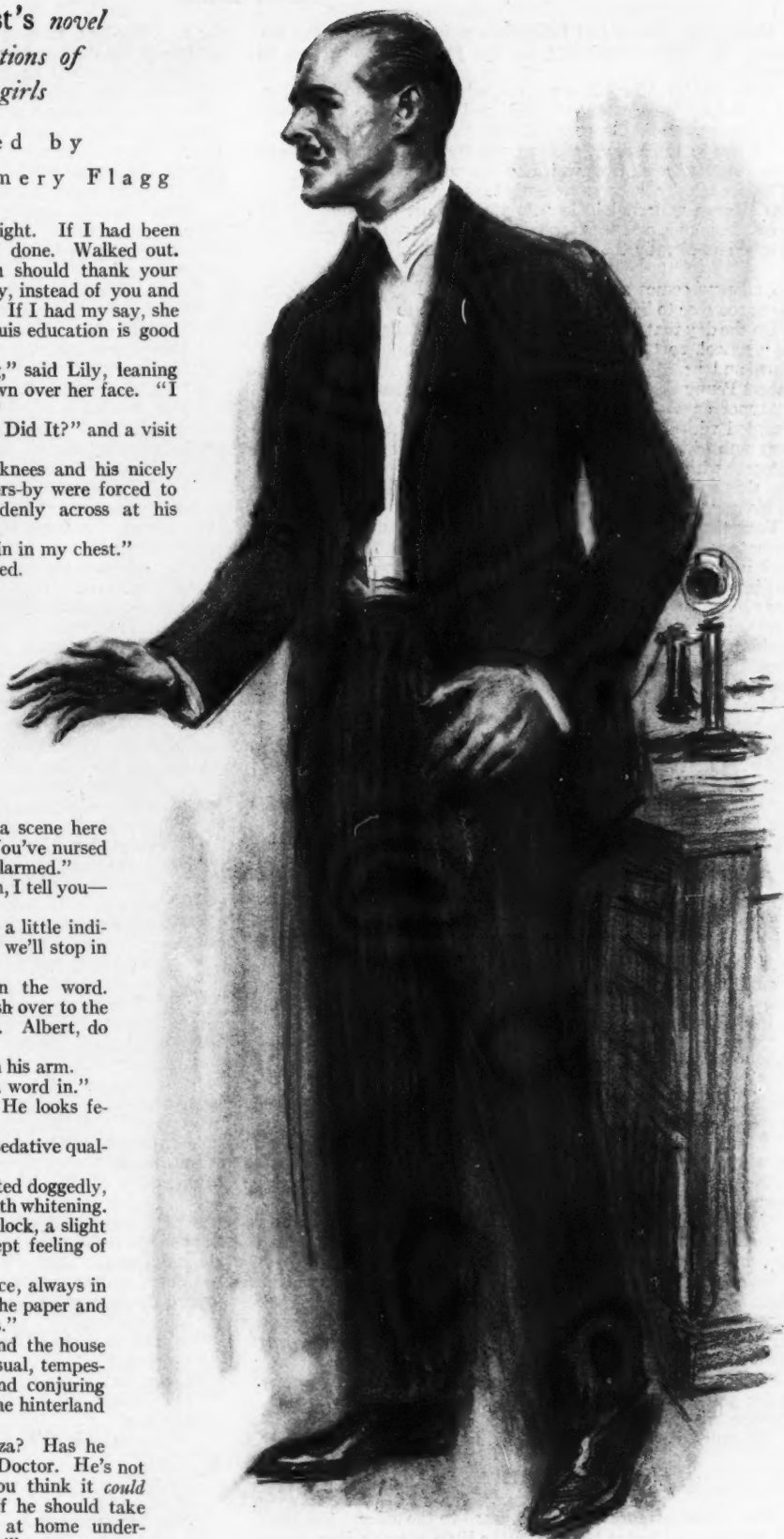
Then Zoë was despatched home and the house physician called in, Mrs. Becker, as usual, tempestuous with instantaneous hysteria and conjuring to Lily another sick-room from out the hinterland of her childhood.

"Doctor, is it the Spanish influenza? Has he fever? He's always subject to colds, Doctor. He's not as strong as he looks. Doctor, do you think it *could* be that Spanish influenza? O God, if he should take sick away from home! Our doctor at home understands his system. My boy—my son!"

With a frozen sense of her alienism, Lily sat, as it were, outside the situation, proffering herself almost with a sense of intrusion.

The doctor would not pronounce, but left with instructions and the promise of a midnight return.

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From the center of the room, Bruce advanced
to meet her

Meanwhile, Albert had fallen into a light sleep. They sat beside his bedside, watching his lips puff out, sometimes in bubbles.

Undoubtedly Albert had a fever, which seemed to be rising. At midnight, the doctor returned, and, at one o'clock, Albert was removed to the Murray Hill Hospital.

He was ill three days, slipping off almost from the beginning into a state of coma from which he was not to emerge.

With a celerity that was presently to race it through the country, this strange malady laid low its victim with what might have been pneumonia except for certain complications that baffled and alarmed an already thoroughly aroused medical world.

And now comes a tide in the affairs of Lily Penny, which, being too true to life, are not sufficiently true to fiction.

On the day that was to have been Zoë's formal graduation from high school, so that the pearl-embroidered slippers were never worn and her diploma brought home to her by a classmate, Albert Penny died, with no more furor than he had lived.

Stupor enveloped Lily. She moved through days incredibly crowded with detail and yet, somehow, so withdrawn into the very nub of herself that it was the shell of her that seemed to compete with the passing time. Certainly it was this shell of her that followed Albert in that strangest of little processions to his cremation.

Four times on that ride through a warm summer rain to the crematory, Mrs. Becker went off into light faints, sobbing herself back into consciousness. It frightened Lily to look at her father. His face had dropped into hollows, and the roundness of his back was suddenly a decided hump. And he had fallen into a silence—a sort of hollow urn of it that not even the outbursts of his wife could rouse to his usual soothing chirpings. He merely sat stroking her hand and staring into a silence which he seemed to see.

Mrs. Becker's state became cause for concern. Once back at the hotel, with Albert's room locked off and once more thrown open to the impersonal feet of transiency, she would only moan and wind her hands and go off into the light state of unconsciousness.

"I haven't my son any more! Why did we come? It might not have happened at home. Our daughter wronged him, but, thank God, we tried to make it up to him! My boy! He was so steady—so careful—I can't realize he's gone. Ben, Ben, how can we go home without him? How can we go home without our boy?"

"Carrie, it's God's will."

"It's nobody's will. God couldn't will it that way. Just as he had got a little happiness in his way. To think he was willing to take her back. I don't care for myself—we're on in years, Ben—we're done—and now we've lost our—all—nothing to live for—"

"Mamma, mamma, don't talk that way! Let me try to make up to you for—"

"I can't face going home. He was my life, that boy. He made up for what we suffered through our own. He was a son to us. Albert, where are you? Albert!"

"Mamma, mamma, won't you let me try to make up, dear, for what I have failed you?"

"No! No! You're not a daughter to me. I want my son. Our way was his way."

"Mamma, please—take me home in his place. I'll make it up to you. Let me go back, dear, in Albert's place. I want to pay up—to you. I'm finished—here, dear. I'm ready—ready—"

Suddenly Mrs. Becker seemed to experience one of her cyclonic shifts. Tears came raining down her face, her sobbing cleft with great racking gulps. Then she dropped to her knees beside her daughter, and, before Lily could prevent, reached up to drag down her face against her own tear-drenched one.

"Don't leave us, Lily! Don't ever! Come home with us. We're getting old, Lily. Don't ever leave us, me and papa. Promise me, Lily! Promise!"

"Of course I promise, mamma darling! Of course I promise!"

XLIII

THE following morning, Lily returned to the office. She hung up her hat, patting at her hair in the little square mirror above the stationary wash-stand, looking back at herself out of eyes a bit dreggy with tiredness, but her skin so deep in its whiteness that it was almost as if its creamy quality had congealed of mere richness.

She rubbed her cheeks to pinken and quicken them, and rang

for an office-boy, turning her back on the pile of letters and reports on the desk and her eagerness to be at them.

"Ask Mr. Bruce if he can see me."

The message came back on the instant. He could.

Lily turned the knob of his office door, so slowly that she saved the slightest squeak, and entered. From the center of the room, Bruce advanced to meet her. He took her hand, and, on the instant, she felt her eyes fill burningly. She could have bitten her lips for their trembling, and tried to smile with her tortured eyes.

"Lily," he said, topping her hand with his, "why didn't you let me know sooner? Your letter an hour ago came out of a clear sky—you see I didn't even know he—was here."

"It was all so—so quick."

"Jove! I don't seem to take it in yet."

"Nor I," she said quiescently, and letting him lead her to a chair. "He—you see, he was only ill three days."

"There doesn't seem much for me to say; does there, Lily?"

"No," she said; "that's it—there's nothing to say."

"I can't bear to think of your having been exposed to it."

"That was the least. He died—afraid. That is so terrible to me, somehow. I wouldn't mind all of the horrible rest if only he hadn't died afraid. I wonder if you know what I mean. He lived so—so meekly to have died—that way. Afraid!"

"Yes," he said; "I think I do know." He wanted to keep his gaze away from her and to keep it cool, but, somehow, each time their eyes met, a flame leaped up out of embers—a fiery new consciousness that kept dancing.

"He and—and my parents—you see, they—well, I told you everything in the letter."

"Are your parents returning out there?"

"Yes. That's what I've come to say. You see—they—we've decided to remain here two months—until September—up in my little apartment—all of us. In September, Zoë is to have her audition with Auchinloss. So much depends on that. We've such hopes, her teacher and I. She's pure lyric soprano—we think grand-opera brand. And now, with the war on, more and more the American girl is getting her chance. That's why my parents have finally consented to wait here with me until then. After that, Zoë is to stay with Ida Blair, and we three—my parents and I—are going home—together. That is what I have come to tell you."

He regarded her, his flush going down perceptibly.

"You're fooling."

"No," she said, trying to smile; "I suppose it's about the most solemn job I have left to do in life—going home."

"Why, you—you can't go back there!"

"I can," she said, her voice held calm.

"I—we can't let you go."

"Why? Zoë—my big job's done."

"Lily, I tell you we need you here more than ever. My brother arrives this morning from Seattle. We've completed the cross-country chain. I'm free now to branch out. I'm counting on you. Lily, you cannot go now."

"I can—must," she said, scraping back her chair. "You must work out your dreams—alone—with some one else. I—must—go." And then, withdrawing from what she saw, "No—no—Bruce—no—no—"

But, just the same, they were in one another's arms with the irresistibility of tide for moon and moon for tide. Press him back with her palms as she would, when his lips found hers, it was as if something etheric had flowed into her brain. She wanted to resist him, and, instead, her hands met in a clasp about his neck. "No! No!" And yet, as he kissed her eyelids and down against the satinness of her hair, it seemed to her that toward this moment all the poor, blind years had been directed.

"Lily—darling!"

She tried to shake off her enchantment.

"You hurt!"

"I want to."

"My—love!"

"My love!"

"So this—this is it?"

"What?"

"Love."

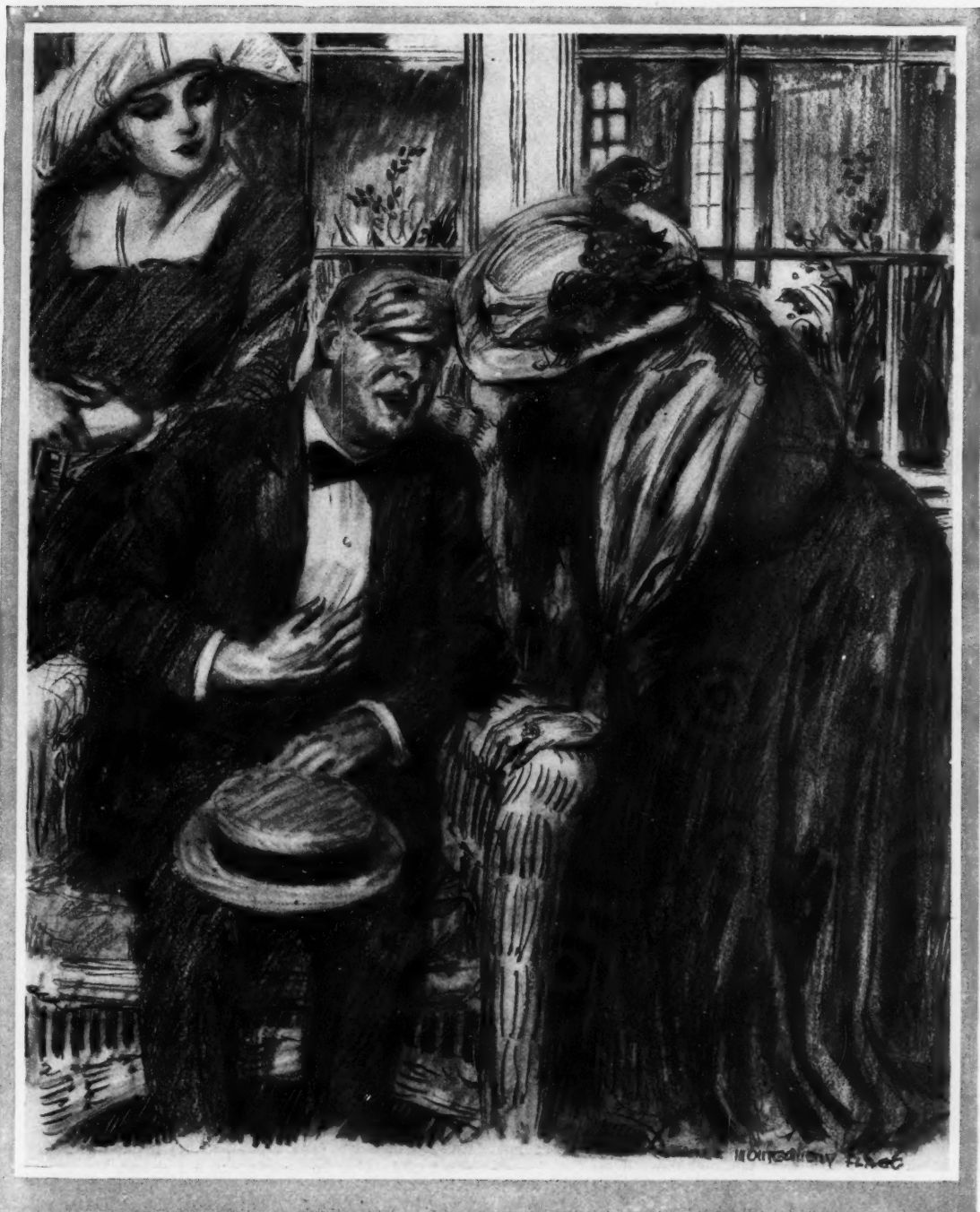
"Love! Love!"

"How beautiful—sex!"

"I want to kiss those stars out of your eyes. I want to wind you in moonlight."

"Bruce, I think I must be mad—crazily—deliciously mad!"

"Me, too. I'm as deliciously, as crazily mad as any young Leander. I want to swim a thousand Hellespontos for you. I want—"



"Albert," cried Mrs. Becker, instantly taken with panic, "let me feel if you have any fever!"

"No—no—no, Bruce! You don't understand—my love——"
 "I do understand. That I have you now to love and adore, to marry——"

The door opened then, quite abruptly. It was Robert Visigoth. He had a straw hat in one hand, and an alligator traveling-bag in the other. The latter he set down rather abruptly.

So instantaneous was their springing apart, and so ready the mind to believe what the heart denied, that it was almost conceivable that he had not seen. There was not even a pause, and through the perfunctory greetings of these two men of strangest relation, Lily found herself, somehow, back at her desk, little prickles out all over her body, and particularly against her face, like the bite of sleet, something like this running behind her lips:

"Please, God, don't let him tell! He promised. Please! God, I'll never give in again! Bruce—my darling—don't let him tell you. He promised he wouldn't. Don't tell him, Robert! Bruce, don't let him! Please, God—don't let him!"

And then, while burning with the fever in her blood, she plunged, for the sedative of it, into the work before her.

After what might have been minutes or hours, the door opened, and, without preamble, Robert Visigoth walked in and seated himself beside her desk.

"How long has this thing been going on?" he said, looking at her from under beetling brows that had grown bushy with the years. Time had done just that to Robert Visigoth—beetled him.

For a second, Lily's eyes moved from the two fifty-cent cigars protruding from his waistcoat pocket to a lodge-button at his lapel, and then, finally trapped, met his.

"How long? I said."

"You've told him?" she asked, leaning forward to hear through the buzzing in her ears.

"Whether I do or not depends on you."

She tried not to let him see how the room was rocking round and round, how suddenly the buzzing had lifted until she felt

light-headed. She could have shouted, danced, wept, or fainted her relief. Nothing mattered, not even the squatty person sitting there with little diabetic puffs beneath his eyes.

"How long has this thing been going on?" he repeated, his voice a rising gale.

"Are you your brother's keeper?"

"From your kind, yes."

"There has been nothing between us."

"That's a lie!"

Through the scorch of her humiliation, it was a second before she could command her lips.

"I swear to God!"

"Bah!" he almost spat out. "After what I walked in on."

"Yes," she said, biting off the words with a clip; "after what you walked in on."

He leaned forward, his face unpleasantly close.

"All I have to say is: Hands off there."

"There has been nothing between us. I tell you it's true."

"I'm not concerned whether it is or not. What has been, has been. But now, hands off! You can't land my brother. The cheek—you—my brother! You must be crazy!"

"You're wrong; you're wrong!" she managed to insist, her throat rising and falling like the sea.

"My eyes aren't wrong. They saw what I stumbled in on."

"I know. I know. It's difficult—impossible to explain away an—an occurrence like that. How well I know the futility of trying to convince your kind of man that there are more than two kinds of women in the world! Good and bad—the women you marry and the women you ruin. I'm bad. Have it your own way. Bad! Bad! Bad! But, for what was your sin as much as mine, you are free in your man-made society to go your way fulfilling your life, and then you dare come here and sit in judgment on my fulfilling mine. When are women going to venture from behind the man-made throne and make you men move over?"

"I'm not here to discuss the double code with you. I don't know and don't care how you have lived since. It is not my business. For fourteen years you have given this firm fine satisfaction for which we, in turn, have tried to express our appreciation. You know that. We know that. Your morals are none of my business except when they touch me. A man's a man. I don't know how you've lived. For my part, I think you've gone pretty straight, but that doesn't change matters. I know what I know, and a man's a man. What are you going to do about it? You know, too, that there is no love lost between me and my brother in the little things. We go our ways. But when it comes to the big—he's my brother. Blood. Get me? Whatever I am can't change me here inside. He's my brother. You're—you!"

"You're right. I wouldn't. I couldn't. I must have been mad—this morning. I—somehow—it got all beyond me in a moment. I swear to you for the first time—do you think I'd muss up one hour of his life—even if I dared—even if you were to come to me on your knees, begging me to—to—marry him? To begin with, I'm older—only a year in time, it's true, but he—he's just beginning. I'm beginning over. What is my life compared to his? He's on the brink of a thousand realizations.



"How cool your fingers are, Zoë!" Like the petals of something."

And I—oh, I'm not whining. I'd do it all over again, loathing you as you must know I loathed you—that night. But my child got her chance. You sold it to me, and I paid for it in the basest coin of the realm. But I'd do it again—knowing what I know now, I'd do it again. You hear! Do you hear?"

"That's past now."

"No! For you, yes; but I'm still paying. Paying at this moment with my—my heart's blood. But if I hadn't done it—gone with you—something would have been lost that night that was worth every cent I paid. They'd have got her back. I don't care. I've won. I've won if I've lost."

She was on her feet now, her eyes, like blue wells that were filling with ink, plunging beyond his with a Testament defiance that seemed to shout, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

"Yes; I love him. You can't take that from me. That is why he is so safe with me. I love him too much for him to know. And yet, I think—I believe—I know that, even if he did know, in the end it wouldn't matter—"

"You must be crazy! Once let your idealist wake up, and there is no more dreaming for him."

"He mustn't wake up—for his sake! Promise! Promise me that you won't ever wake him!"

"Whether I do or not is up to you."

"What do you want?" she said tiredly.

"I suppose the black and white of it is that you must quit."

"That is easy. I'm resigning, anyway, the fifteenth of September to go West to live."

He took on the half-conciliatory graciousness of one who has gained his advantage with unsuspected ease.

"I'd give a great deal not to have had this happen, but, after all, a man is a man and life is life."

She let her gaze bore into his like gimlets burning for center.

"I think you've explained that before."



"Lily, naughty man is holding back one of my hands on me"

He began to back out before her immobility.

"I am remaining East two months. I hope your resignation will allow us that much time to attempt to fill your place."

"I leave that to you. It can be either immediate or take effect in September."

"By all means the latter. Will you—can you believe me when I say if there is anything I can do—letters—an opening with a Western firm—"

"Please!" she said, turning him a shoulder in high distaste.

"I have your word, then?"

"My word," she said, looking past his hand toward the door.

He backed out, and then she sat down, swinging round on her swivel chair toward the desk.

It was noon when Bruce, finally and without preamble, burst into her office.

"Lily—sweetheart—let us call it a day. I want to drive you out to Tarrytown to—"

"Don't," she said, frowning.

"Don't what?" Her immobility was an ineffectual stop to his exuberance. "Come now; don't let his nibs bouncing in that way throw a damper. We were too quick for him, anyway. Don't believe he saw a thing. And what if he did? He's going to know it anyhow, and pretty quick, too. I want to shout it from the housetops. Lily—Lily mine! Sweetheart!"

She crowded back into the chair.

"How dare you?"

He fell back with a gesture still wide.

"Why—what? Dare what? Oh, come now, sweetheart! I could wager he didn't see—and suppose he did. I'm for telling him to-day, anyhow."

"No! No! No! You played unfair. You took me—unawares. You misunderstood me horribly—most horribly—"

"You mean—"

"Why, you—you boy! What has happened cannot make any difference between you and me. It was outrageous of you—silly boy, you—to—to take advantage. After all that has passed—all these years—it is unthinkable that you didn't understand. Why, you—you boy!" She saw his jaw fall and the sense of his ridiculousness set in. "What has merely been absurd all along you have suddenly made intolerant. You make more imperative my resignation. You must understand, Mr. Visigoth, under what conditions I will consent to remain here these few weeks."

The words were so stilted that she had the sensation of throwing metal disks on a stone floor and waiting for their tinny clatter.

She could see the high red drain out of his face, and then rush up again as if he had been slapped.

"Lily, for God's sake, you—you cannot be serious?"

"No mock heroics—please."

His ears tipped with flame, he straightened back from her.

"No more mock heroics," he said, in a voice suddenly quieted down like vichy gone stale. "Forgive an old—fool—a young—fool—and forget it. Thank you for jerking me up." He raised her limp

hand, bowing over it until his lips hovered but did not touch. "My solemn word on it this time—no more—mock—heroics." The door clicked after him.

XLIV

THERE came a very torrid day in September, the fourteenth, to be exact, when the little apartment in West End Avenue stood denuded, stripped to a few huddled trunks and Zoë's dressing-table, chair, piano, and desk ready to be carted out to the little sea-view room that awaited her in Ida Blair's Long Island bungalow. They were a group diverse of emotion and perilous to one another's nerves this last morning.

MRS. BECKER: I think I'd better write my girl another postal to be sure and have supper ready when we get home Thursday night. There is some canned salmon in the grocery closet I forgot to mention, and she can borrow a few potatoes from the Shriner's for frying, until I get a chance to lay in supplies when I get home. Poor Albert, how he loved salmon and fried potatoes! Ben, help me to realize what has happened!"

MR. BECKER: Now, Carrie!

LILY (to herself): Salmon and fried potatoes! Page Avenue! Shriners! Funny—O God—why—oh—oh—funny!

ZOË: Lily, feel my heart—how it beats.

It was as if Lily could not take her eyes from off her daughter.

"Remember what Trieste said, dearest. Let your nerves be so many violin-strings, tightening but not quivering."

"It's your going, Lily. I—I can't seem quite to grasp it. You will come back to me soon—in two months—one—I couldn't stand it longer."

"Yes; and, Zoë, you will write every day?"

"Lily, Lily—don't go. It's madness! Stay, darling. I feel

like a pig—all that money—his—if you are not entitled to touch it, I am not."

"You are his child, and the only wrong you ever did him was through me. Zoë, Zoë, go straight to your mark!"

"I—I can't realize it, Lily. To-day! He's going to hear me to-day—this very afternoon. I—I feel as nervous at the prospect of singing before you as before him. I—I think I'm the luckiest girl in the world. Lily, sometimes I—I—think life has—has sort of cleared the way for me to walk in its lovely places—you have cleared the way. But what—what if he doesn't think I've the voice *Maestro* thinks I have? I couldn't stand that, Lily—the way you stood it."

"But he will," said Lily, a memory shaping itself. "Remember your power begins where mine left off. You heard Du Gass the year before she died, but you were too young to remember. Your voice is so much—so infinitely bigger, Zoë, and your knowledge and defiance of life and of Auchinloss make me so unafraid for you—"

"Kiss me, Lily. I'm frightened—not of Auchinloss—or life—but of—oh, I don't know—frightened of silliness, I guess."

"I'm not."

"But you're trembling."

"Of hope."

At eleven, Lily went down to her office, Leon Greenberg already at her desk. It was largely a matter now of sliding in the new prop before sliding out the old.

There were several farewell offerings from various of the older girls. She cried a little.

By noon, the top of her desk was bare and the drawers empty. She sat looking out over the waves of roofs of a city that had beaten her back at every turn, lashed her, and yet, with the mysterious counterflow of oceans, had carried her out a foot for every ten it flung her back.

She felt full of sobs, but quiet—strangely quiet, as if the champing machinery of her life had stopped suddenly, leaving a hiatus that made her heart ache of passivity.

At two o'clock, by appointment, came Zoë—like a blaze of light—her eyes, with her mother's trick of iris, full of inner glow, and her blond hair set off with a droop of tam-o'-shanter.

There had been a new frock of heavy white crêpe, with a wide white hat for this occasion. Instead, with last-moment decision, she had come in one of the straight blue frocks, to her ankles now, the wide patent-leather belt, a knot of orange and blue ribbon, representing her active membership in a local canteen-service, at her throat. She came glowing through the daring simplicity, flamboyantly and to the *n*th power of Lily's slower personality, her mother's child.

"Hurry, darling; I've a taxi waiting. We're to meet *Maestro* at the opera-house."

"Zoë, I'm glad you wore this instead. Did your grandmother feel badly that you didn't wear the one she gave you."

"I wasn't myself in it. No—room."

In the corridor going out, Bruce stepped suddenly out of his office into their path. Zoë's hand had shot out.

"Hello, you!" she said.

He looked at her through a slow smile.

"Well, I'll be hanged! The youngster! Good Lord, what have they done? Who elongated you? Where are the pull-dresses and the corkscrews?"

She withdrew a highly haughty hand.

"You poor, misguided Rip Van Winkle! When did you return from the Catskills?"

"When did it happen?" he asked Lily, trying to keep his eyes from crinkling.

It was the first time in this last brace of weeks that there had been more than the merest perfunctory word between them, and she tried to throw her cold lips into a smile.

"You forget that you haven't seen her since last Christmas. Six inches more of skirt and a few hairpins did it."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he kept reiterating. "Zoë grown up?"

"Is it true you are going to try for the aviation? Ida Blair says you are."

"Looks that way."

"You're too old."

"Well then, I'll have to come down to earth. You and your mother have different ideas regarding my age. I'm rather dizzy about it this minute myself. Either time is putting one over on me or you have caught up. By Jove, that's it—you've caught up! You're immense!"

She was suddenly, and to Lily's amazement, a creature of flashes and quirks, of self-and sex-consciousness.

"Don't like to be—immense!"

"Georgious, then."

"Better."

"Don't go. Let me look at you."

"Come with us. Dare you."

"Zoë!"

"Where?"

"I'm singing this afternoon for Auchinloss. My audition at the opera-house."

"The deuce you say!"

"I've a cab waiting," she said, challenging him with a flash of eyes.

"Wait," he said, darting into his office.

"Zoë, how dared you?"

"Lily—he's thrilling! I want him along; I feel keyed up now. The way I want to feel—edgy!"

Before Lily's persistently cold lips could reply, Bruce rejoined them, and presently they were all three in the cab.

His contemplation of Zoë became a stare.

"So little Zoë grew up."

"I'm going on sixteen. You used to be old enough to be my father. Not any more. Now you are old enough to me my—anything."

"Zoë!"

"Good Lord!" he said. "Fact."

Suddenly her nervousness came flowing back over her.

"Lily, look at me every second while I'm singing, darling. You, too"—leaning toward Bruce and placing cold fingers on each of their wrists.

"Delightful and easy task!"

She made him a *mouse*, prettily pouty.

"You'll be sorry when I'm famous that you didn't take me seriously."

"How can I take you at all when you've taken me off my feet?"

"You've never heard me sing, have you?"

"No."

"Wait."

"I palpitate."

"I'm going to be all alone now, you know," she said, looking at him with her brilliant eyes filling.

"More's the pity," he said, feeling rather than seeing the downward brush of Lily's lashes.

"I'll be out at Ida Blair's until—for a while."

"May I come out and play with you, now that you are caught up and I can be your—anything."

"You may."

Laughter.

With the stopping of the cab, such a javelin of nervousness shot through Lily that it was as if it had pierced her heart.

A lovely pallor was out over Zoë, enlarging the dark pools in her eyes.

"Sit out in the house, center aisle, and look at me, dears—so I can feel you there."

To the magic of a bit of cardboard they were in the vast, fantastic hinterland of the opera-house, and, stumbling through various degrees of blackness, were presently down in the colossal maw of the auditorium, finding out seats in the great pit of darkness.

They sat in silence, except that, for Lily, the beating of her heart seemed to record like a clapper against her brain.

"Don't be nervous," Bruce said once.

"I'm not," she lied.

There was a bunch-light on the stage, a dirty back drop of Corinthian pillars and esplanade, and no wings, one or two stage-hands moving about, and, finally, a concert-grand piano, dragged down-stage.

Suddenly, Lily recognized Auchinloss. He was standing just outside the pool of light that flowed over the piano, the unforgettable outline of his shaggy head, joined by two little peninsulas of side-whiskers to the heavy spade of beard, gray now, and not the sooty black she remembered.

The odor of that little room up on Amsterdam Avenue came winding back. Millie Du Gass, the supreme soprano of two continents—dead now, of heart-break, some said; Alra, in her plaid silk waist, and the bookkeeper's curve to her back. That walk across the parlor floor—

"There's Auchinloss now," said Bruce.

She did not reply, but sat with her handkerchief against her mouth and crowded breathing.

There were three auditions.

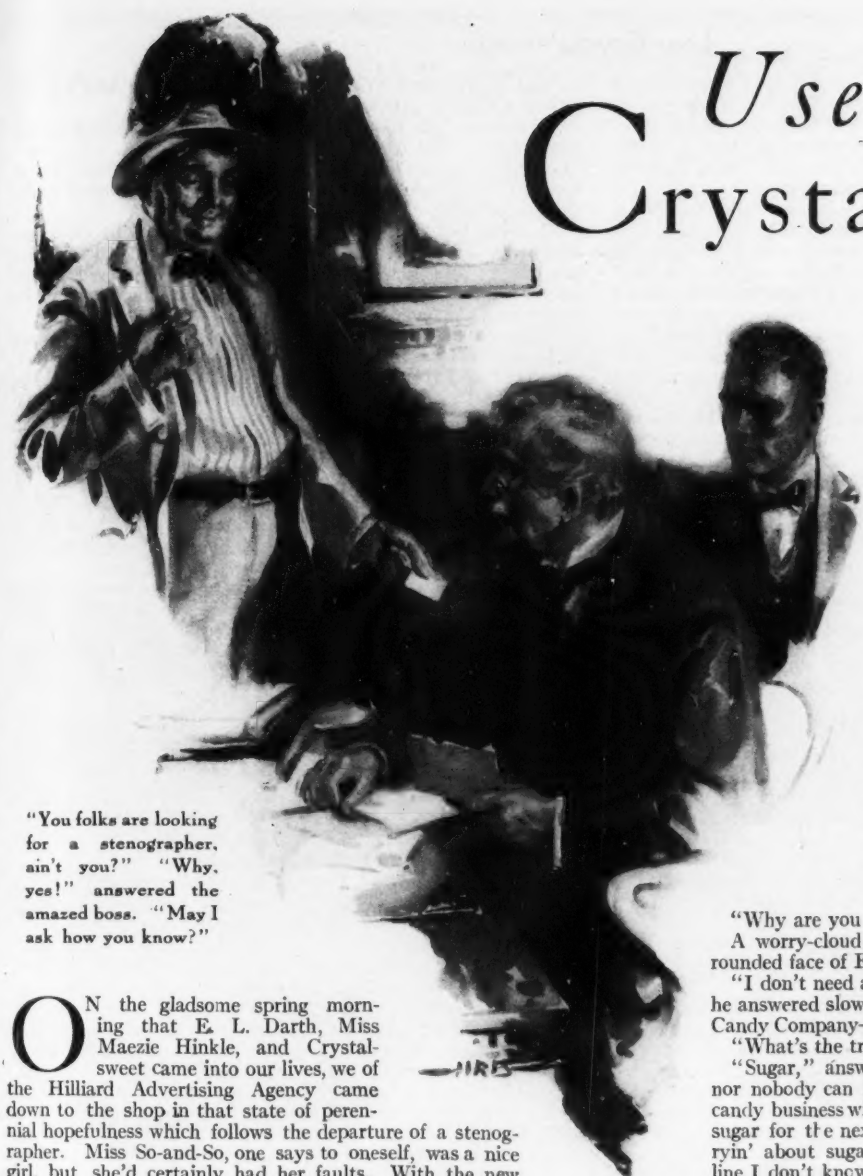
(Continued on page 118)

Use Crystalsweet

*One of those
rarely told
romances of
Advertising*

By
Marion
McCrea

Illustrated by
H. R. Ballinger



"You folks are looking for a stenographer, ain't you?" "Why, yes!" answered the amazed boss. "May I ask how you know?"

ON the gladsome spring morning that E. L. Darth, Miss Maezie Hinkle, and Crystalsweet came into our lives, we of the Hilliard Advertising Agency came down to the shop in that state of perennial hopefulness which follows the departure of a stenographer. Miss So-and-So, one says to oneself, was a nice girl, but she'd certainly had her faults. With the new girl—who is as yet a faceless, personalityless being—we will squelch all annoying little tendencies, we think, firmly and easily, in the very beginning. We all came down feeling that way—that is, except the boss.

"I used to hope, as you do, during the first twenty years of my business experience," he remarked, as he opened the top letter of the tall pile which had come in answer to his help-wanted ad, "that each new stenographer would prove the stenographer of my dreams. But after the thousandth disappointment—"

Unannounced by any formality of knocking, there entered the boss's private office a rotund person, clad in the first Palm Beach suit of the season, proffering, in bediamonded hand, a large business card decorated by a three-color process.

"E. A. Darth, Darth Candy Company," I read, at a distance of six feet from the card.

"You folks are looking for a stenographer, ain't you?" "Why, yes!" answered the amazed boss. "May I ask how you know?"

"Oh, girls' rest-room stuff," cryptically grinned E. A. Darth. "Your old stenog told one of my stenogs she was goin' to quit here. Y'know, these girlies have a sort of talk-fest-system news-bureau up there on current events in this building. Not that Miss Hinkle ever wasted a minute's time in the rest-room or any place else. Miss Hinkle's the young lady I came down here to recommend for this job of yours. It's tough for a nice girl to go round on a job-hunt—ain't it the truth? And after the class of work that little girl's done for me, I can't do too much for her. Believe me or not, men, she's a *perfect* stenographer.

And she gets cut letters that, honestly, look like the ones the typewriter salesman shows you in his catalogue. And as for looks—well, she's so genteel and nifty-lookin' that, just sittin' in the seediest old outer office, she'd make it look like a million dollars!"

The boss and I gazed on each other incredulously.

"Why are you letting her go?" asked the boss.

A worry-cloud chased the high lights from the rounded face of E. A. Darth.

"I don't need a first-class stenographer any more," he answered slowly. "My business—the E. A. Darth Candy Company—has just about reached the rocks."

"What's the trouble?" asked the boss.

"Sugar," answered Darth disgustedly. "Nothin' nor nobody can help me or induce me to stay in the candy business without they can guarantee me enough sugar for the next year at least. I'm through worryin' about sugar. I'm goin' to start over, in what line I don't know just yet, but it's goin' to be a line where I don't need to care a hang what the sugar-market's doin'. I'm goin' to pull out just as soon's I can sublet my offices down-stairs and turn my factory equipment and some big supplies of paraffin and saccharin into cash money."

"You have a big supply of saccharin?" asked the boss.

"Sodium saccharin—the crystalline solid which is two hundred and eighty times as sweet as sugar and so harmless to the digestive organs that physicians recommend its use in the food of babies," recited Darth sarcastically. "That's the spiel of the smooth profiteer who sold me that saccharin. I was fool enough to buy it during the war. Got panicky, y'know. Couldn't get sugar enough to fill my back orders. I almost—" His eyes shifted, and his face got red. "I'm ashamed to tell it, folks," he embarrassedly went on, "but I'd almost got desperate enough at one time there to manufacture a few emergency batches of candy and use saccharin in 'em instead of sugar and put 'em out under the Darth Candy trade-mark."

The showy Darth Candy trade-mark, it was plain, was his combination of unsullied escutcheon and hard-won badge of honor. This chap was overdressed, in the careful manner of men who knew what it felt like to be shabby and perhaps ragged when they were youngsters. But we knew he was one hundred per cent. all right. The boss shot him a big smile and an understanding little punch in the back.

"I know just how you feel about your trade-mark, Mr. Darth," he assured him. "Now, about that saccharin—how much of it did you say you have?"

"Oh, a young storeroomful, I guess. I'll cash in on it some-way, sometime. But to get back to Miss Hinkle, friends—"

"We'll be extremely glad to get her," interrupted the boss, his mind, I saw, working rapidly on something else. "I'd like to take a trip out to your factory with you, Mr. Darth, if you've the time to-day. I want to see that saccharin."

And that, dear ultimate consumers, is how Crystalsweet was born. The boss called up a chemist and told him about an idea for a sugar substitute that had been half formed in his brain for some time. We all went out to Darth's plant and spent the day in the laboratory. When we went to his apartment for dinner that evening, we each carried a box of snowy, glistening cubes made of a food-substance, combined according to a formula of the chemist's, which was sweetness with sodium saccharin to exactly the same degree of sweetness as cane-sugar and possessed almost the same food-value. We christened "Crystaisweet" in our after-dinner coffee; then got Darth's kid brother busy over a chafing-dish of Crystalsweet fudge, and worked the cook till midnight on Crystalsweet pastries, jellies, sweet pickles, and Crystalsweet everything else for which we'd ever seen sugar used. A few hours' after-midnight figuring and a hard battle between the boss and short-sighted old Darth brought out the shining truth that Crystalsweet could be retailed at about half the current price of sugar. What the possibilities for Crystalsweet were could be judged by any schoolgirl who was cruelly limited to two lumps per cup at her sorority lurchcon. It's only once or twice in an advertising lifetime that a proposition like Crystalsweet is sent from heaven.

Before we left Darth in the gray early hours of that morning, he had agreed to invest in national advertising all the capital he could raise out of the perishing Darth Candy Company. Thereupon, the boss and I decided to buy ourselves a wedge of the Crystalsweet plum pie by selling a piece of Western land which we owned jointly. We've been clubbing ourselves ever since for not having bought a larger wedge. Cheerfully unsuspecting of the chance we were passing up, we turned in at about four A.M.

And promptly at nine A.M., a miniature vision of the business world's absolute ideal of the perfect stenographer entered our office, took a sensible little hat from her smooth blond head, and sat quietly down to work, announcing, in the voice of a dignified infant,

"I'm Miss Hinkle."

The boss and I, after our scant four hours of sleep, blinked unrememberingly for several seconds.

Miss Maezie Hinkle, in every inch of the four feet eleven from her simple golden coiffure to her natty doll's shoes, was a brief but perfect dream of efficient immaculateness.

Now, I believe in attractive stenographers. They are part of the explanation for the splendid working morale in the business offices throughout our land. But this stenographer, the boss and I silently wirelessly each other about five minutes after her advent, was too, too attractive for the working morale of any office. L. Burbank Bott, the business world's laziest office-boy, already was hanging over her desk with the air of an elderly lover, making reckless offers to bring heavy supplies of stationery from the highest and most remote shelves, to manicure her typewriter for her so she wouldn't have to "doity" her patties. Kornheim, our *blasé* star solicitor, who had always banged out his reports on his own typewriter, strolled in and asked if she would take some dictation late in the afternoon—obviously an excuse to see if she could possibly be as cute as she looked through the glass partition.

Miss Hinkle treated them, however, with the grave impersonality of a popular baby. And in ten minutes she had her typewriter-desk looking neater than her spinster predecessor had ever had it during the previous ten months. Before the boss had finished opening his mail, she had half a dozen pencils artistically sharpened and her note-book dated, ready for dictation. Either she had a lot of sense, the boss and I decided, in a short, smiling conference in his sanctum, or long experience had rendered her absolutely impervious to all brands of office jolly. At any rate, we considered the stenographic labor problem in our little advertising agency settled.

The boss, according to his habit, began the morning's dictation with the most difficult letter he had to write that day; it was the one with which he hoped to interest a big public-utilities corporation in the Western land that was to buy us both a part of the new Crystalsweet proposition.

"This tract of unimproved land," he dictated absorbedly, "was sold to the Sequoia Hydroelectric interests after they had secured one several miles down the river, which, for their especial needs, they considered a dam-site better—"

Miss Hinkle's pencil dropped. She raised to the boss's face a pair of childishly shocked blue eyes.

"Scuse me," she murmured, with a slight lisp, picking up her pencil again, "but I *was* surprised!"

Jerked from the far-away, woods-mirroring Sequoia River, the boss stared dazedly. Then he got the idea. He rushed to the copy-department dictionary.

"I mean *this* kind of a 'dam,' Miss Hinkle," he explained anxiously. He slapped back a bunch of pages. "And this kind of a 'site.' See? I was going to dictate, 'They secured a tract several miles down the river which they considered a dam-site better than the one—'"

"I just have the worst luck I ever saw—getting funny-sounding dictation!" declared Miss Hinkle, in a sobby little voice. "Mr. Darth got so nervous lately that he got something the fellows in the office said is 'aphasia.' He'd dictate letters about 'scutterbotch' and 'weppermint and pintergreen lozenges' and then expect me to unscramble it and turn in perfect work. I was so glad of a chance to change jobs! I mean, I *was* glad till just now."

I grabbed my hat and got out, although it was an hour before my date with the Ad Club's lunch-bunch. I'd got only as far as the reception-room, though, when the boss came following me, clutching *his* hat. He gripped my weary writing arm.

"Dace," he groaned, "for freak schemes you have the best brain in the office. You must think up some quick way of getting that girl out of our office. Think fast!"

"Good grief, that's a big order, old man!" I complained. "Remember it's got to be some scheme that won't get us in bad with Darth. We can't afford that as yet."

But he wouldn't let me off.

"Under that neat blond hair-dress of hers," he raved, "there's a one-hundred-word vocabulary and an infantile grouch against all office mankind. I feel at this moment as if I'd told her there wasn't any Santa Claus. How the deuce old Darth got along so well with her, I can't conceive—he must have a sweet way with children. Are you thinking hard, Dace?"

I cranked up the old creative imagination.

"Our worst enemy," I reminded him suddenly, "is the printer. And he's always needing stenogs. Let's, by all means, wish the cute little terror on Lundgren, the printer."

So, early that afternoon, I telephoned Lundgren, the printer.

And early next morning, Lundgren, the printer, telephoned me.

"Say, Dace, I've changed my mind about taking that stenographer of yours that you've got to let go so you can give the job to your bankrupt friend's daughter. Take a look at the first sentence on page nine of one of that batch o' booklets I broke my neck getting ready for you by noon to-day. And, first, remember that I've never claimed that I and my helpers are giving any absolutely fool-proof service here. Before you begin to curse *me* for what meets your eye, take a slant at the typewritten copy that was prepared by that 'intelligent, world-beating' stenog of yours."

I got out the typewritten printer's copy and then turned to page nine of the thousand beautiful booklets for which a client of ours was to pay forty cents apiece.

"The practise," I read, "of reprinting excerpts from food-examiners' reports in this misleading way is thoroughly ab—"

The sight left my eyes. I had dictated the word "abominable." Miss Hinkle had transcribed it "abdominal."

"But you can't fire a girl for just one mistake like that," moaned the boss, when I showed it to him.

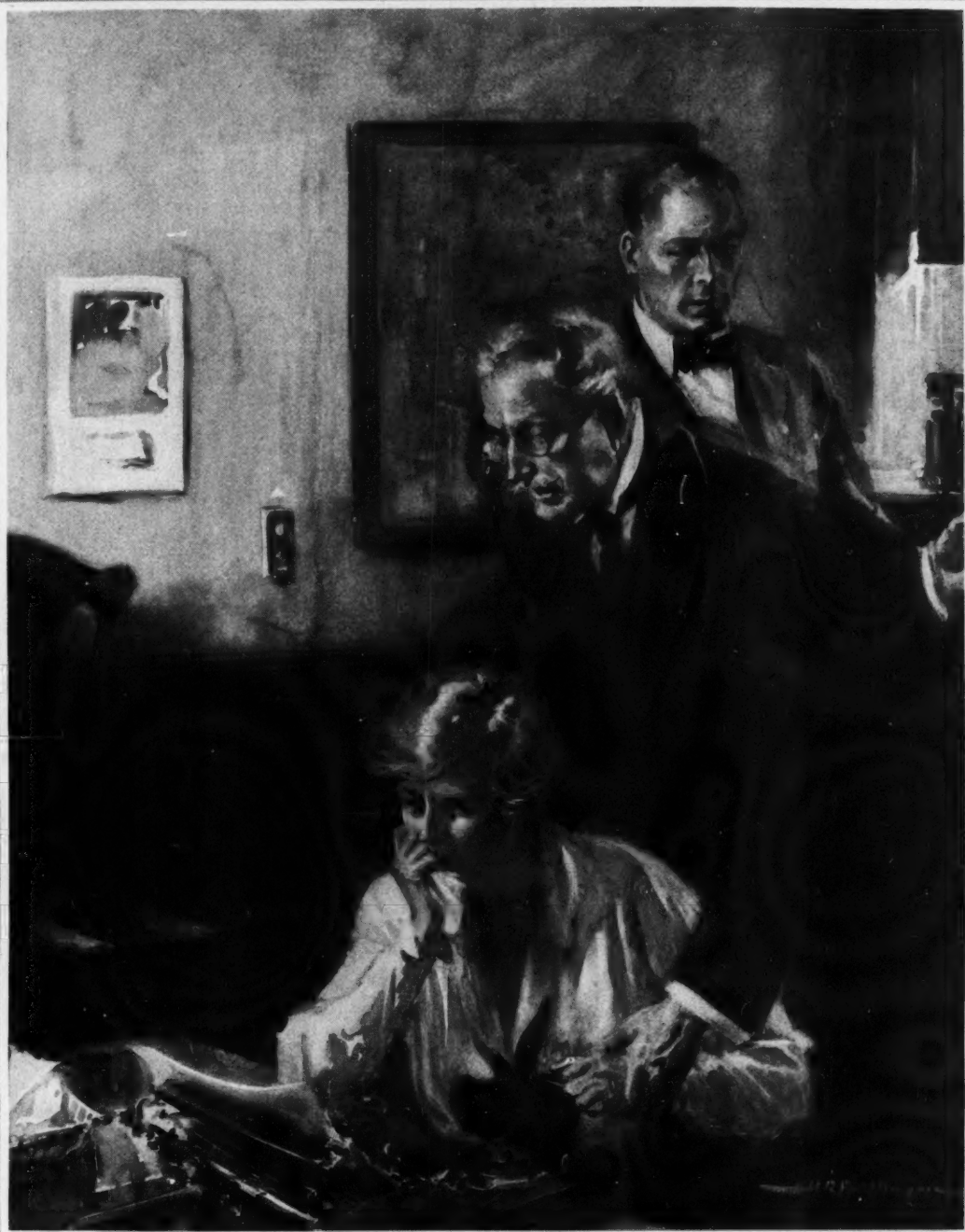
"We sure could," I darkly disagreed with him, "if it weren't for the fact that we can't afford to offend our new star client—as yet."

From that day forth, I spent most of my time scouring my own copy and the boss's for those unique, protectively colored Hinkleisms. Little Maezie didn't make a great many mistakes, but when she did make one, it would be a staggerer. The stuff that's dictated in an advertising agency, you know, has a way of getting itself reproduced a couple of thousand times. And that little lady's mistakes were of the sort that would somehow ride past the dictator, two proof-readers, and a printer—and then would pull an advertiser a few hundred miles across the country to demand explanations, refunds—sometimes even reinsertions.

"How's Miss Hinkle getting along?" Darth would periodically inquire, with the modest smile of one who has done you a supreme favor and is trying to look as if he doesn't want you to thank him for it.

"Oh, great!" we'd say, gritting our teeth—and waited.

Meanwhile—as Burbank, the office-boy, expressed it in the refrain of an original composition of his with which he serenaded



"Oh, what shall I do? How can I stop being so s-stupid?" she was demanding madly between those horrible gulps

Miss Hinkle after he had dragged "Pretty Baby" out of the limbo of forgotten songs and sung it till he'd grown tired of it—

"Cute little baby-doll Maezie,
She drives all us boys simply crazy!"

L. Burbank was right. But when we soulfully repeated it after him, we didn't mean what he meant. He meant that she was driving his sixteen-year-old mind crazy with unrequited love. The rest of us meant that she was driving us crazy with nerve-strain.

Can you imagine, gentle magazine reader, what you would do if you had a little Maezie in your office? There I go, talking like a display ad again. Our stenographic service consisted of this combination: Fairly good work, with an average of three horrific time-wasting and money-wasting typographical errors per week;

a stenographer whose normal manner was that of an abused baby; a stenographer possessing an upper lip that pouted at all times in an injured way; a stenographer whose manner at the slightest criticism of her work would promptly change to that of a freshly spanked baby; a stenographer who upon any real criticism would raise a face so filled with baby woe that your only natural reaction would be instantly to gurgle something like, "Unkie tho thorry he was cruel to baby!" and then to wipe some candy from her mouth and some tears from her eyes and shut some pennies up tightly into her dimpled fist, beg a French kiss, and a bear-hug, and then ride her to Banbury Cross till she began to smile up again and prattle forgivingly in that infantile voice of hers.

"If I could only think of an innocent-looking way of wishing little Maezie back onto Darth!" I wept to the boss, correcting

Use Crystalsweet

a letter in which, instead of, "The progress of this agency is worth noting," Maezie had written, "The progress of this agency is worth nothing."

"Oh, let the poor child stay till the Crystalsweet campaign is well launched, anyway," the boss answered. He spoke—he'll never forgive me for this adverb—chicken-heartedly.

Well, the Crystalsweet campaign got itself well launched. That campaign immediately began to pull trial-orders at a rate which made us afraid, every time we saw Darth, that he was going to kiss the hem of our trousers.

"Now for the canning of Maezie!" stormed I.

"Oh, wait just a day or two more," back-watered the boss.

"The poor little thing's tried so hard lately. And, besides, I don't want to take the chance of breaking in a new stenog till I've finished dictating some hard preliminary stuff on my new cheap-fish proposition."

So the menace of Maezie stayed with us.

The boss's "cheap-fish" proposition was a new advertising campaign to create a demand, through magazines and newspapers, for three cheap but palatable kinds of fish—herring, shad, and skate. A newly formed Cape Cod fisheries association could well afford to retail these three un-aristocratic poor fish at such low prices that they would work real reductions in the food-budgets of thousands of families. The skate possibilities tickled the boss especially. One of the fish-association men had happened to tell us that dishonest dealers were cutting skate meat into scalloplike pieces and putting them on the market as scallops. "Do the self-same thing," the boss had counseled. "Put the imitation scallops into cans and put an attractive trade-mark on the cans and then advertise them honestly as 'skate delicacies—delicious bits of sea-food which can't be distinguished from the choicest scallops.' And after you've got that started, just give me a chance to show you what I can do for your shad and your unpopular six-dollar-a-barrel herring. Nowadays, a few gland-teasing adjectives in an honest food advertisement can teach an old dog like the law of supply and demand some sensational new tricks."

He landed the cheap-fish advertising.

And Maezie stayed on and on.

The boss dictated to her a whole cook-book of cheap-fish recipes which he had prepared with the help of a woman food-expert. And he dictated a booklet about a magazine-ad contest offering cash prizes to the ladies of our land for still more cheap-fish recipes. And he also dictated, during the long, hot days of our vacationless summer, all the copy for huge schedules of magazine and newspaper advertising. And I, cracking under the strain, sleuthed through all of the boss's copy for the deadly, ambushed, camouflaged errors which Maezie knew how to make; and upon calling her attention, ever so gently, to these errors, I was made to feel like a child-beater who would one day be found out and subpoenaed through the influence of some member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

On the autumn afternoon on which the last ad of the first cheap-fish campaign had gone into the mailing-basket, I selected a symbolic blue envelop and figured out on the back of it just how much we owed Maezie to that date, plus one month's extra salary. Clutching this arithmetic, I stalked into the boss's sanctum. Already he was cowering. He'd been expecting me.

"W-wait, Dace—just till I get off a form-letter that should have gone yesterday. Then, on my honor, I'll—" He straightened his back and began to look scrappy. "Then we'll match coins and see which of us has to do the job of firing her."

The form-letter which the boss then dictated was long and difficult for Maezie. She had to refer so many times to her tattered little dictionary that, by the time the letter was finished, approved by me, and given to L. Burbank to mimeograph and post to a list of our prospective clients, that slacker of a boss had sneaked from the shop.

And when he eased in next morning, I, through pride, and he, through fear, refused to reopen the subject of the great fire. He merely asked, as an excuse to break my ice, if his form-letters had gone out all right. When I frozenly replied that they had, he slunk silently into his office.

The boss was vitally interested in that latest form-letter of his. He had worked out another new plan—of trade-marking and nationally advertising a number of comparatively inexpensive and hitherto unexploited foods and foodstuffs. As he said toward the end of the form-letter, in which he outlined his plan to a number of manufacturers, packers, and fruit-and-vegetable-growers:

Suggestion is as good an appetizer as hunger itself. Nowadays, any practical new idea for reducing the cost of living gets the immediate attention of the whole nation. Now is the time, therefore, for you to make capital of that tremendous power of suggestion. This agency



(which specializes in food advertising) will be glad to submit you a detailed plan of what it knows to be the most effective possible plan of campaign.

The first reply to the form-letter came from a friend of the boss's, whose corn-meal the boss wanted to trade-mark and advertise. It came in the form of the latter itself, with a paragraph of the corn-meal man's original comedy fountain-penned across the bottom. More and more comic replies followed in ensuing mails. In the last line of that precious form-letter, instead of "effective," Maezie had written "defective." Just read back and get it.

It couldn't be called the last straw. It was the last bale.

"Let's do it right now—together!" huskily proposed the boss, when I'd showed him the first reply.

Maezie, fortunately, happened to be alone in the copy department when we death-marched in. Her long-fringed blue eyes traveled slowly from our faces to the form-letter in the boss's hand.

"Have I made another bad mistake?" she inquired, in the strangest little throaty voice.

"W-well," began the boss, "a little one, Miss Hinkle—"

"Pardon me," I butted in, "a very serious one, Miss Hinkle. In fact—"

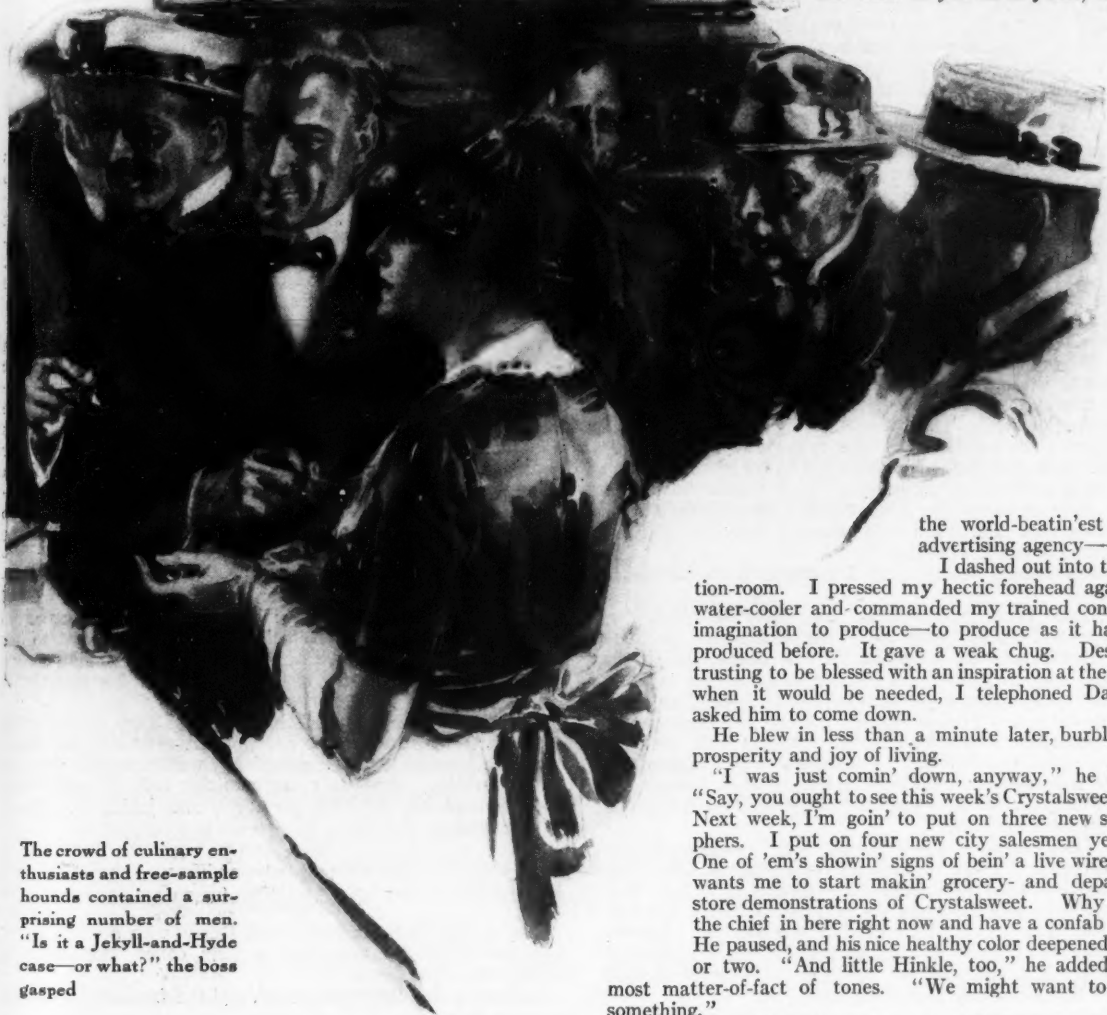
Miss Hinkle screamed—literally screamed. My scalp froze. Then she dropped her head on

and everything in the whole world, and I don't know any other way to make money and I wish I was dead! I tell you, I'd love to be dead!"

She was screaming again.

For a full half-hour, the boss talked to her steadily, soothingly, in a low, petting sort of voice I didn't know he possessed. At last, he cautiously worked a funny story into the monologue. Miss Hinkle grew quieter and quieter. Then my boss uttered this:

"And your work is simply fine, little girl! Where'd you ever get the idea that anybody round this ad shop expected you never to make any mistakes? Don't you remember the old vaudeville gag: 'Everybody makes mistakes; that's why they put rubbers on lead-pencils?' Why, if Dace here and I made as few mistakes in our work as you do in yours, we'd have



The crowd of culinary enthusiasts and free-sample hounds contained a surprising number of men. "Is it a Jekyll-and-Hyde case—or what?" the boss gasped

one arm, and with the other began to batter a tattoo on her desk that would have made her little fist black and blue if the boss hadn't caught and held it.

"Hysteria!" he explained palely. With experienced hand, he patted her small shirt-waisted back, which was jerking with gasping, dry sobs. To my helpless horror, he did absolutely nothing for two minutes—just let her cry like that. Then he asked me, petrified as I was, to get a glass of water. When I'd somehow got under motion and brought it, she was trying to talk.

"Oh, what shall I do? How can I stop being so s-stupid?" she was demanding madly between those horrible gulps. "I t-try so hard—but I n-never do any better. You use such b-big words—I never know what the old d-dictation means. I know you try to be nice to me, but I hate you and this job and myself

the world-beatin'est li'l old advertising agency—"

I dashed out into the reception-room. I pressed my hectic forehead against the water-cooler and commanded my trained constructive imagination to produce—to produce as it had never produced before. It gave a weak chug. Desperately trusting to be blessed with an inspiration at the moment when it would be needed, I telephoned Darch and asked him to come down.

He blew in less than a minute later, burbling with prosperity and joy of living.

"I was just comin' down, anyway," he beamed. "Say, you ought to see this week's Crystalsweet orders! Next week, I'm goin' to put on three new stenographers. I put on four new city salesmen yesterday. One of 'em's showin' signs of bein' a live wire, too; he wants me to start makin' grocery- and department-store demonstrations of Crystalsweet. Why not get the chief in here right now and have a confab on it?" He paused, and his nice healthy color deepened a shade or two. "And little Hinkle, too," he added, in the

most matter-of-fact of tones. "We might want to dictate something."

I think I must have given him a long, clairvoyant stare.

"Excuse me," I apologized.

I loped into the copy department. I dragged the boss into the vault, switched on the light, and closed the steel door on us.

"Chief," I began, "you don't deserve it, but permanent relief is in sight. Darch has just told me he's going to put on three new stenographers next week. He says he came down here to talk about grocery-store demonstrations for Crystalsweet. What he's really come down for undoubtedly is to try to get Miss Hinkle back—and to try to do it without hurting our feelings!"

"Oh, Dace," moaned the old softy, "d'you really think there's a chance that the poor little thing'll get a good job and leave here?"

"Wait! Harken! I've just discovered that Darch's about—well, I should say about half in love with Miss Hinkle!"

"No?" beamed the boss. "Dace—why, he's a bachelor, isn't he? Oh, Dace—that would remove her forever and ever from the stenographic world!"

We opened the steel door and speeded back to the office in which Darth was waiting.

"I've just had a little conference with the chief here, Darth," I gloomily started right in, "about this stenographic problem of yours. You'll need to look for only two new stenographers instead of three. We've decided to let you have Miss Hinkle back. No one else but you could get her away from us. But we've felt guilty for having taken a stenographer who'd been giving you such perfect satisfaction—"

"Perfect—nervous prostration!" exploded Darth. "Lord, I'm glad you two polite easy marks are opening up this subject at last, so I can satisfy my curiosity as to how the dickens you ever got along with her all these months. If she'd stayed in my office one more week, I'd have committed suicide—or infanticide."

"Darth," I gasped, "you conscienceless, you—you—"

"Twenty times a day," he raved on, "little Hinkle had me feelin' like a child-torturer—the rest of the time like just a plain brute. When that girl first came into my office, men, I liked her. Lord, but I liked her! But she hadn't been in the place an hour before she began to pull that cry-baby expression, and I never saw it leave that sulky little face of hers again. Ain't it a pity—a cute little trick like that—with a disposition like that? Y'know, some day some big, protective-feelin' guy like me'll fall hard for her, and then—God help him! He'll never have another day's self-respect—she'll have him feelin' like a wife-beatin' cave-guy every time he's five minutes late gettin' back from the office! There's something wrong—all wrong with that girl; ain't it a fact?"

E. A. Darth is one of those dented-up old alumni of the school of hard knocks who's been insulted by experts. I tried to think of a way of getting under his skin, but gave it up.

"How did you dare, Darth," I finally began, registering quiet scorn, "come down here and praise that girl's work as I never heard an employee's work praised?"

"It was a low trick," he commented light-heartedly; "but I'd have done worse'n that at the time to get rid of that pretty little pest. Not that she ain't right smart in her own way. She cooked up a batch o' candy once, all by her little 'lone, and brought some down to the bookkeeper. He gave me a piece of it, and the stuff had such a new taste and crunch to it that I trade-marked it and it went fine."

"So Miss Hinkle can cook?" I murmured. I pressed a buzzer.

Miss Hinkle came in, her small nose shiny and pink, and her big eyes still pitifully moist round the rims.

"Mr. Darth tells us, Miss Hinkle," I began, taking the businesslike tone that something told me would be best with her just then, "that you are an expert candy-cook. Now, we're going to try out a new plan of making grocery and department-store demonstrations to attract women shoppers with the idea of cooking with Crystalsweet." I raised my voice to drown out a strange stuttering from Darth. "We're all most anxious," I went on hurriedly, "to have you take charge of the first Crystalsweet demonstration-booth."

"Why, I don't know—I s'pose I could do it," commented Miss Hinkle listlessly. "I like to cook, all right—that is, I do when I'm not too dead tired from banging a typewriter all day." Her pretty eyebrows and the upper lip puckered until her face had again settled into its chronic, peeved-baby expression. Watchfully waiting, the three of us hung on her next words. "Well, I guess I'll try it, if you want me to," she indifferently decided at last. "It can't be any harder than *this* job."

I started up and began to pilot her by one of her small elbows toward the copy-department door.

"Miss Hinkle, please be at Mr. Darth's office to-morrow morning at nine o'clock," I sang out, "to plan the demonstration-booth with one of his salesmen. Mr. Darth will, of course, put you on a commission basis and, besides, guarantee you a considerably larger salary than you're getting from us."

She toddled out without wasting another word on us.

"Well, old sport," boomed Darth, as the door closed with a pettish little slam, "I admit it was comin' to me! But you can't make me mad. Not unless little Hinkle drives me to the job of canvassin' this whole buildin' and workin' the same sob-act I did on you folks to get her out of my employ again."

"Sob-act?" I frowned recollectingly.

"Sob-act's what I said," chortled Darth. "It was a good sob-act, too. I know, because I'd gone through it in nine offices

before I tried it in this place and struck luck. Had I heard a report that one of the girls had heard in the rest-room that you needed a new stenog? No; I had not. Was my candy business going on the rocks on account of the sugar-shortage? Not on your life. But didn't I have a sound, healthy lie to account for lettin' go of such a top-notch stenog? Was it my fault that you fell hard for it and then forced me into the Crystalsweet business and made me earn an income about six times as big as my candy line ever did in its palmiest days? No; it was not. D'you blame me? And ain't I some actor, boys? And, I ask you, don't it seem impossible," he finished, his face glooming up, "that a man would go to all that trouble to get rid of anything as cunnin' as little Hinkle?"

We roared and slapped his soft back so hard he shook like a Speedy-Jel pudding.

"She'll have to spend quite a lot of time in your office this week," I reminded him. "You know, I told her that the Crystalsweet demonstration ought to be under way by next Saturday. Fine chance!"

But the demonstration *was* under way by Saturday. Anyone who has had any experience with demonstrations knows that you can't ordinarily get space arranged for and a decent-looking booth installed in less than twice the time in which Miss Maezie Hinkle had managed to do it.

At the end of a perfect hades of a day at the office, the boss and I went dutifully to the largest department store in town to look the Crystalsweet demonstration over.

Upon reaching the booth, we couldn't get much idea of what it looked like. The crowd of culinary enthusiasts and free-sample hounds round it contained a surprising number of men. When we had finally elbowed our way into a good view, we stared, adjusted our eye-glasses, and stared harder.

"Is it a Jekyll-and-Hyde case—or what?" the boss gasped.

A girl who looked as if she must be Miss Hinkle's joyous twin sister stood ladling out a pistachio-tinted dessert into the daintiest of sherbet-cups. At each of the flattering remarks addressed to her as to the flavor of this pale-green foam, she brought into play a full set of dimples which neither the boss nor I had ever seen as long as we had known Maezie. Her costume was an exact duplicate of that worn by the cook in our Crystalsweet ad on the back-covers of the women's magazines for April. The cap looked as if it had been whipped into existence with an egg-beater, and over the webby edge of it there curled little tendrils of shining hair, such as warmth, excitement, and the bathing-beach bestow upon the most favored of our sisters. Her summer-sky-colored dress was misted over by a filmy burlesque of a bibbed apron. The tiny sleeves of the aforesaid dress were efficiently rolled up almost to her shoulders—neither of which carried a chip. You couldn't even imagine a chip ever having rested on one of those busy little shoulders.

As for the demonstration-booth, it also was a toy reproduction of the perfect kitchenette of our women's-magazine ad—blue-and-white tile, potted pink geraniums, ruffled muslin curtains and everything. And on every available inch of space were displayed candies, desserts, preserves, and jellies, all labeled in this manner:

Made with
No Other Sweetening Than
—Ounces of
CRYSTALSWEET

From a singing percolator, friend Darth, with a white apron over his rounded façade, was serving coffee, sweetened, of course, with Crystalsweet.

The store's first closing-bell rang, and the free-sample hounds began to disperse.

I drank two large cups of Darth's coffee, strong and black. I'd had a fearful day, and I felt I needed them. Suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten to eat any lunch, that I'd worked like a demon on the plan of campaign for our new corn-meal account, with the added irritations of breaking in our new male stenographer and managing without an office-boy—L. Burbank having telephoned that he had been suddenly afflicted with a violent toothache and would have to spend the afternoon at the dentist's. And afterward the boss and I had walked ten blocks in the record-breaking heat of that September day. My hands felt cold and my cheeks hot; one eyeball began to jerk, and my knees seemed slowly liquefying. Worst of all, I felt a speech coming up. A big idea had hit me while I was drinking that coffee, dizzy as I was. Whenever I get muddle-headed from overwork or heat or any pleasanter cause, ideas that look

"Hello! little stranger
You warn me of danger
I'll guard all my children with care
I'll see every day
They have plenty of play
And eat Campbell's nourishing fare."



Watch the health barometer

Look out for the little warning signs—poor appetite, uneasy sleep, uncertain temper.

Nip these symptoms in the bud. Don't wait for serious trouble, particularly with the children.

See that they have plenty of sleep, plenty of play. Above all watch their appetites.

Here is where Campbell's Tomato Soup will help you most decidedly. It is rich in the tonic properties—vitamines the doctors call them—which strengthen digestion and aid the body's natural building-up processes.

Made of vine-ripened tomatoes and other nutritious materials, everybody enjoys and thrives on this delicious soup.

Serve it regularly and often. It will do the whole family a world of good.

21 kinds

15c a can

Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED AND WHITE LABEL



THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

LIKE Love's benediction comes the Spirit of Christmas-time, the greatest gift of all—the Gift of Giving. Throughout the ages it has lasted, deep in the hearts of men, bringing forever its joy and happiness.

It is best expressed by the most enduring of man-made gifts—those of the Jeweler's Handicraft, beautiful Gifts that last.

Authorized by
National Jewelers Publicity
Association

DIAMONDS • PEARLS
GEMS • JEWELRY
WATCHES • CLOCKS
SILVERWARE

immense at the time begin to hit me, and I have overpowering desires to make speeches about them. I locked my teeth, so my tongue couldn't possibly get through, and tried to pay attention to a monologue which Maezie was addressing to the boss and me.

"Oh, since I've been cooking with Crystalsweet, I've learned a lot of things about it that you don't know," her baby voice was declaring. "You let the whole cheap-fruit season go by without ever saying one single thing about canning and preserving in your Crystalsweet ads. And a doctor at my boarding-house told me that it wouldn't hurt anybody to go without any sugar at all, and he said it would be a lot better for our complexions and figures. You've never said anything about complexions or figures in your Crystalsweet ads. And there's an old lady at my boarding-house who can't eat sugar 'cause she's got the beginnings of diabetes, —and you've never said a word about diabetes in any of your ads."

"Why, on my soul, these are real ideas, Miss Hinkle!" delightedly exclaimed the boss.

"You bet—and she worked 'em all out in her own li'l head!" beamed Darth.

My jaws weakly opened, and the speech began to come through. I shouldn't have drunk the coffee.

"Gentlemen," I heard myself beginning, "why the amazement? All this is perfectly natural. It merely means that Miss Hinkle is now in the right job. In her stenography job, she expressed only about twenty per cent. of herself. Like all square pegs in round holes, she suffered from inhibited pep. In this job, she is herself; her mind is functioning normally; she is a young woman of business insight, practical imagination, executive efficiency—in short, brains, which reminds me"—I felt myself turning oratorically to the boss—"that I've just conceived a —"

"A big idea on our girls'-school proposition, I bet," chuckled the boss.

"You guessed it," I impatiently admitted. "Here we've been trying for weeks to find an idea that will attract more school advertising into the *Homemakers' Magazine*, and make their advertisers spend less money on catalogues and more on magazine space. A department of free vocational advice for girls—that will turn the trick. We'll begin it with a short article and a 'Questions and Answers' department. 'Is there anything more vital,' we'll say, 'to the welfare of this nation than the right schools for its girls and boys? The right school leads to the right job. And the right job is magic. The right job is the path to lifelong contentment. The right job leads to —'"

"The right job leads a girl to the right life-pardner sometimes," interrupted Darth. He was gazing, with his honest heart in his eyes, at Miss Hinkle. "For heaven's sake, you advertisin' nut you, dry up on that bore of a school proposition! I ask you, doesn't Miss Hinkle—and the kitchenette—frilly apron and all—d-doesn't she l-look like a l-little Brune jide?"

"Good-by, Miss Hinkle!" I exclaimed speedily shaking hands, and at the same time picking up my forgotten straw hat from the floor.

"Good-by, Mr. Dace," she answered solemnly. "And if I don't see you again, I want you to know I'll never, never forget what you said just now about my having brains. I was such a misfit in an office, and I never knew it—I thought I was just stupid; and I *know* I acted like a—a little pill, but I couldn't help it. Your dictation was so hard, and I was thinking all the time how you must despise me—you're so awfully interested in your work and so terribly intelligent, you and Mr. Hilliard. And, Mr. Dace, you're absolutely the only man I ever met in my whole life who treated me like a young lady. The way every other man in the world talks to me, you'd think I was—was dressed in a romper!"

That strange dizziness of mine grew a thousand times worse—two blurring, tragic blue eyes were the only stationary things in a madly gyrating universe. A terrific crashing of tin pans mechanically jerked my eyes toward the kitchen cabinet from which they had fallen. L. Burbank—he who was to have been detained by the dentist until at least six o'clock—crawled out from behind it. He began to pick up the pans, and to sing in low, husky tones, slowly, as if it were a dirge, his long-discarded serenade:

"Everybody loves a baby—that's why I'm in love with you,
Pretty baby, pretty baby;
Won't you come and let me rock you in my cradle of hearts,
And we'll cuddle all the time——"

His voice broke. Straightening up, he stared at me with eyes of hate. I became conscious that Darth was pathetically staring at me in pretty much the same way. Also that I was still gripping a squirming small hand.

Then my dizziness, which I suddenly knew had not been from heat or overwork or coffee, let up; I remember coolly, craftily giving myself this warning:

She mustn't know that, having always loved kids, I possess an immense vocabulary of baby-talk.

But she's going to.

First Aid for Loony Biddle

(Continued from page 48)

It takes a great deal to startle your commercial New Yorker. The small tailor, standing in his doorway, seemed in no way surprised at the spectacle of Archie, whom he had seen pass at a conventional walk some five minutes before, returning like this at top speed. He assumed that Archie had suddenly remembered that he wanted to buy something.

This was exactly what Archie had done.

More than anything else in the world, what he wanted to do now was to get into that shop and have a long talk about gents' clothing. Pulling himself up abruptly, he shot past the small tailor into the dim interior. A confused aroma of cheap clothing greeted him. Except for a small oasis behind a grubby counter, practically all the available space was occupied by suits. Stiff suits hung from

Cosmopolitan for December, 1920

Columbia Grafonola

Give Music This Christmas

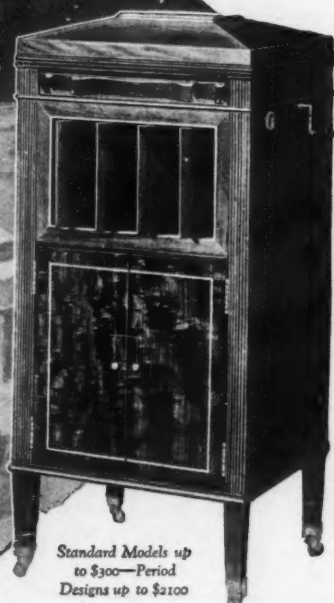
Give your family a Columbia Grafonola with Columbia Records for Christmas. Then right at your fireside you will find such famous *exclusive* Columbia popular artists as Al Jolson, Bert Williams, Frank Crumit, Harry Fox, Marion Harris, Nora Bayes, Ted Lewis' Jazz Band, and Van and Schenck; such *exclusive* Columbia opera stars as Barrientos, Gordon, Hackett, Ponselle, and Stracciari; and a world of other artists besides. Call on any Columbia dealer and he will gladly demonstrate that the Columbia Grafonola playing their Columbia Records always gives you exact reproductions of the music these artists themselves produced on the original wax in the Columbia Laboratory.

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO., NEW YORK
Canadian Factory: Toronto



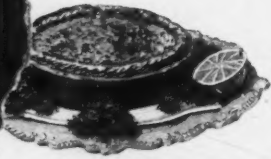
The Only Non Set Automatic Stop

Nothing to move or set or measure. Just start the Grafonola and it plays and stops itself. Never stops before it should. Always stops at the very end. Exclusively on the Columbia Grafonola.



Standard Models up
to \$300—Period
Designs up to \$2100

BURNHAM & MORRILL FISH FLAKES



Try This Recipe

To one cupful cream sauce add one tin B & M Fish Flakes and pour into a shallow baking dish. Cut three hard boiled eggs in half lengthwise and arrange on top of the fish, pressing down slightly. Cover with bread-crumbs and grated cheese. Bake in a hot oven for 20 minutes until top is a golden brown.

Burnham & Morrill Fish Flakes

The firm white meat of choicest Cod and Haddock—direct from the Sea to you and immediately obtainable

AT YOUR GROCER'S

Ready for instant use in preparing

**Fried Fish Cakes Fish Soufflé
Fish Hash Fish Chowder**

and many other tempting fish dishes.

Free on request—"Good Eating"
a booklet of delicious recipes for
Burnham & Morrill Fish Flakes.

BURNHAM & MORRILL CO.

83 Water St., Portland, Maine



INVENTORS Desiring to secure a patent should write for our book, "How To Get Your Patent." Send model or sketch of invention for opinion of patentable nature.

RANDOLPH & CO.

Dept. 33 - - - Washington, D. C.

LABLACHE

FACE POWDER

Lablache pays homage to the complexions of millions of fair women, who in appreciation say "We use Lablache and always will until something better is found." Lablache has been the standard for nearly fifty years.

Refuse Substitutes
They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream, 75c; a box of druggists or by mail. Over two million boxes sold annually. Send 20c. for a sample box.

BEN. LEVY CO.
French Perfumers, Dept. 69
125 Kingston St. Boston, Mass.



books. Limp suits lay on chairs and boxes. The place was a cloth-morgue, a Sargasso Sea of serge.

Archie would not have had it otherwise. He had been in airier places; he had been in places which did not give him so acute a sensation of being slowly stifled by trousers, but he had never been in a place which contained more charming and delightful possibilities of concealment.

"Something nifty in tweeds?" inquired the businesslike proprietor of this haven, following him amiably into the shop. "Or, maybe, yes, a nice serge? Say, I got a sweet thing in blue serge that'll fit you like the paper on the wall!"

Archie wanted to talk about clothes, but not yet.

"I say, laddie," he said hurriedly; "lend me your ear for half a jiffy." Outside, the baying of the pack had become imminent. "Stow me away for a moment in the undergrowth, and I'll buy anything you want."

He withdrew into the jungle. The noise without grew in volume. The pursuit had been delayed for a priceless few instants by the arrival of another truck, moving northward, which had drawn level with the first truck and dexterously bottled up the fairway. This obstacle had now been overcome, and the original searchers, their ranks swelled by a few dozen more of the leisured classes, were hot on the trail again. There was, however, a certain confusion inevitable in undertakings of this sort. The new arrivals, insufficiently abreast of affairs, were not decided as to the exact nature of what they were chasing. One school of thought held that it was a mad dog; a second, that it was a coon who had swiped some one's watch; a third, that it was a small boy who had broken a shop window. The foundation members of the club were finding it hard to impart their information clearly.

"You done a murder?" inquired the voice of the proprietor, mildly interested, filtering through the wall of cloth. "Well, boys will be boys," he said philosophically. "See anything there that you like? There's some sweet things there."

"I'm inspecting them narrowly," replied Archie. "If you don't let those chappies find me, I shouldn't be surprised if I bought one."

"One?" said the proprietor, with a touch of austerity.

"Two," said Archie quickly. "Or possibly three or six."

The proprietor's cordiality returned. "You can't have too many nice suits," he said approvingly, "not a young feller like you that wants to look nice. All the nice girls like a young feller that dresses nice. When you go out of here in a suit I got hanging up there at the back, the girls'll be all over you like flies round a honey-pot."

"Would you mind," said Archie, "would you mind, as a personal favor to me, old companion, not mentioning that word 'girls'?"

He broke off. A heavy foot had crossed the threshold of the shop.

"Say, Uncle," said a deep voice, one of those beastly voices that only the most poisonous blighters have, "you seen a young feller run past here?"

"Young feller?" The proprietor appeared to reflect. "Do you mean a young feller in blue, with a Homburg hat?"

"That's the duck! We lost him. Where did he go?"

"Him? Why, he come running past, quick as he could go. I wondered what he was running for, a hot day like this. He went round the corner at the bottom of the block."

There was a silence.

"Well, I guess he's got away," said the voice regretfully.

"The way he was traveling," agreed the proprietor, "I wouldn't be surprised if he was in Europe by this. You want a nice suit?"

The other, curtly expressing a wish that the proprietor would go to eternal perdition and take his entire stock with him, stumped out.

"This," said the proprietor tranquilly burrowing his way to where Archie stood and exhibiting a saffron-colored outrage which appeared to be a poor relation of the flannel family, "would put you back fifty dollars. And cheap!"

"Fifty dollars?"

"Sixty, I said. I don't speak always distinct."

Archie regarded the distressing garment with a shuddering horror. A young man with an educated taste in clothes, it got right in among his nerve-centers.

"Honestly, old soul, I don't want to hurt your feelings, but that isn't a suit; it's just a regrettable incident."

The proprietor turned to the door in a listening attitude.

"I believe I hear that feller coming back," he said.

Archie gulped.

"How about trying it on?" he said. "I'm not sure, after all, it isn't fairly ripe."

"That's the way to talk," said the proprietor cordially. "You try it on. You can't judge a suit, not a real nice suit like this, by looking at it. You want to put it on. There!" He led the way to a dusty mirror at the back of the shop. "Isn't that a bargain at seventy dollars? Why, say, your mother would be proud if she could see her boy now."

A quarter of an hour later, the proprietor lovingly kneading a little sheaf of bank-notes, eyed, with a proud look, the heap of clothes which lay on the counter.

"As nice a little lot as I've ever had in my shop!" Archie did not deny this. It was, he thought, probably only too true. "I only wish I could see you walking up Fifth Avenue in them!" rhapsodized the proprietor. "You'll give 'em a treat. What you going to do with 'em? Carry 'em under your arm?" Archie shuddered strongly. "Well then, I can send 'em for you anywhere you like. 'S all the same to me. Where'll I send 'em?"

Archie meditated. The future was black enough as it was. He shrank from the prospect of being confronted next day, at the height of his misery, with these appalling reach-me-downs. An idea struck him. It was a long time since he had given his father-in-law a present.

"Yes; send 'em," he said.

"What's the name and address?"

"Daniel Brewster," said Archie, "Hotel Cosmopolis."

Archie went out into the street, and began to walk pensively down a now peaceful Ninth Avenue. Out of the depths that covered him, black as the night from pole to pole, no (Concluded on page 92)



LADEN WITH GOOD THINGS.

Baker's Cocoa and Chocolate

preparations are good to drink and good to eat. Many delicious drinks and dainty dishes can be made from them. We tell you how in our booklet of Choice Recipes. Send for one.

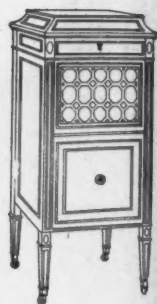
140 years of experience in chocolate making.

WALTER BAKER & CO. LTD.

Established 1780.

DORCHESTER, MASS.

*Furniture Making
in the days of
Queen Elizabeth*



Sheraton

Out of the golden

THE search led back across the Atlantic, into the manor-houses of England, the chateaux of France, and the castles of Italy. Here they came to light—the aristocrats of furniture—the true originals of the period-furniture styles. And Mr. Edison's designers adapted seventeen of these masterpieces for the modern American home.

PERIOD FURNITURE is a heritage of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries. The Georges reigned in England, and the Louis ruled in France.

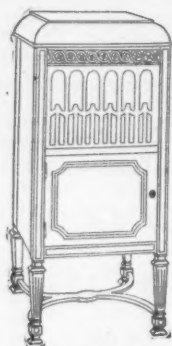
Fine living was the ideal of the day.

Men of artistic genius were lionized by fair ladies, and made wealthy through the lavish

patronage of kings. The arts prospered like flowers under June's smiling sun. Architects conjured up monumental palaces. Landscape artists set them in fairy grounds. Painters illumined their walls with imperishable canvases. Unparalleled designers and craftsmen furnished their interiors.

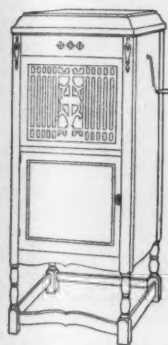
This era of luxury produced Chippendale, Sheraton, and other masters of the English, French and Italian schools. It brought the cabinet-maker's art to its most exquisite development. It was aptly named "THE GOLDEN AGE OF FURNITURE."

TWO CENTURIES later came a momentous development in music.

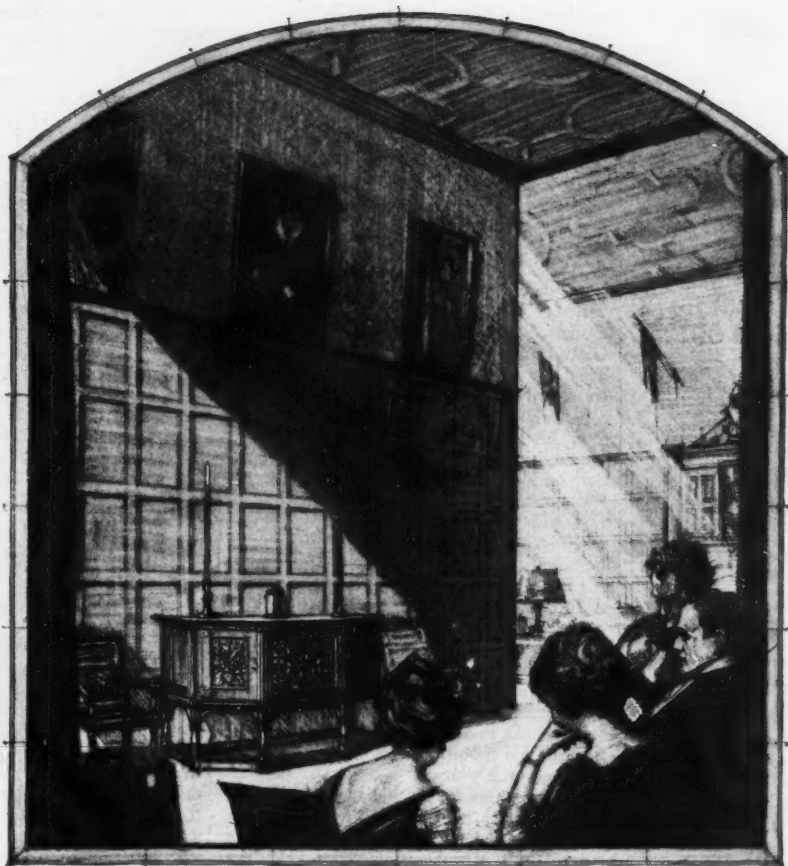


Louis XIV

The NEW EDISON in 17 period cabinets



Jacobean

The Elizabethan
Cabinet adapted
by Mr. Edison

age of furniture

EDISON, the thinker, conceived the vision of an America, whose every home would be blessed with great music,—through a phonograph of SUPREME REALISM. Edison, the inventor, gave three millions of his money and seven years of his time to an exhaustive research—out of which the New Edison was finally evolved.

Then commenced those startling tests by which he proved, through direct comparison, that the New Edison RE-CREATES an artist's performance exactly as the artist himself gives it. More than 4,000 such tests were given, with over fifty vocalists and instrumentalists. More than four million people

heard them. No one was able to tell the living performance from its RE-CREATION by the New Edison.

THE FAMILY that has an ear for the finer things in music is the family that has an eye for the finer things in furniture. Mr. Edison decided that Edison Cabinets should be patterned after the most exquisite furniture known.

And so the search led back across the Atlantic, into the manor-houses of England, the chateaux of France, and the castles of Italy. Mr. Edison's designers made every Edison Cabinet a period cabinet out of the Golden



Chippendale

Age of Furniture.

THOMAS A. EDISON, INC., Orange, N. J.

the phonograph with a soul The NEW EDISON



The Sport for Women

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single ray of hope came to cheer him. He could not, like the poet, thank whatever gods there be for his unconquerable soul, for his soul was licked to a splinter. He felt alone and friendless in a rotten world. Why had he not been content with his wealth, instead of risking it on that blighted bet with Reggie? Why had he trailed the Girl Friend—dash her! He might have known that he would only make an ass of himself. And, because he had done so, Loony Biddle's left hand, that priceless left hand before which opposing batters quailed and wilted, was out of action, resting in a sling, careened like a damaged battle-ship; and any chance the Giants might have had of beating the Pirates was gone—gone—as surely as that thousand dollars which should have bought a birthday present for Lucille.

A birthday present for Lucille! He groaned in bitterness of spirit. She would be coming back to-night, dear girl, all smiles and happiness, wondering what he was going to give her to-morrow. And when to-morrow dawned, all he would be able to give her would be a kind smile. A nice state of things! A jolly situation! A thoroughly good egg, he did not think!

It seemed to Archie that nature, contrary to her usual custom of indifference to human suffering, was mourning with him. The sky was overcast and the sun had ceased to shine. There was a sort of somberness in the afternoon which fitted in with his mood. And then something splashed on his face.

It says much for Archie's preoccupation that his first thought, when, after a few scattered drops, as though the clouds were submitting samples for approval, the whole sky suddenly began to stream like a shower-bath, was that this was simply an additional infliction which he was called upon to bear. On top of all his other troubles, he would get soaked to the skin or have to hang about in some doorway. He cursed richly and sped for shelter.

The rain was setting about its work in earnest. The world was full of that rending, swishing sound which accompanies the more violent summer storms. Thunder crashed; lightning flicked out of the gray heavens. Out in the street, the rain-drops bounded up off the stones like fairy fountains. Archie surveyed them morosely from his refuge in the entrance of a shop.

And then, suddenly, like one of those flashes that were lighting up the gloomy sky, a thought lighted up Archie's mind.

"By Jove! If this keeps up, there won't be a ball game to-day."

The next escapade of *Archie in America* will appear in *January Cosmopolitan*

With trembling fingers, he pulled out his watch. The hands pointed to five minutes of three. A blessed vision came to him of a moist and disappointed crowd receiving rain-checks up at the Polo Grounds.

"Switch it on, you blighters!" he cried, addressing the leaden clouds. "Switch it on more and more!"

It was shortly before five o'clock that a young man bounded into a jeweler's shop near the Hotel Cosmopolis—a young man who, in spite of the fact that his coat was torn near the collar and that he oozed water from every inch of his drenched clothes, appeared in the highest spirits. It was only when he spoke that the jeweler recognized in the human sponge the immaculate youth who had looked in that morning to order a bracelet.

"I say, old lad," said this young man, "you remember that jolly little what-not you showed me before lunch?"

"The bracelet, sir?"

"As you observe, with a manly candor which does you credit, the bracelet. Well, produce, exhibit, and bring it forth, would you mind? Trot it out. Slip it across on a lordly dish, my dear old trafficker in gems."

"You wished me, surely, to put it aside and send it to the Cosmopolis to-morrow?"

The young man tapped the jeweler earnestly on his substantial chest.

"What I wished and what I wish now are two bally separate and dashed distinct things, friend of my college days! Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day, and all that. I'm not taking any more chances. Not for me! For others, yes; but not for Archibald! Here are the doubloons. Produce the jolly old bracelet. Thanks."

The jeweler counted the notes with the same unctious which Archie had observed earlier in the day in the proprietor of the second-hand-clothes shop. The process made him genial.

"A nasty wet day, sir, it's been," he observed chattily.

Archie shook his head.

"Old friend," he said, "you're all wrong. Far otherwise and not a bit like it! You've put your finger on the one aspect of this blighted P.M. that really deserves credit and respect. Rarely, in the experience of a lifetime, have I encountered a day so absolutely bally in nearly every shape and form, but there was one thing that saved it, and that was its merry old wetness. Toodle-oo, laddie!"

"Good-evening, sir," said the jeweler.

Rings and Chains

(Continued from page 29)

but, even to the most unsophisticated person, the stark apartment-houses crowding forward to the sidewalks were the dwelling-places of those whose incomes were meager and whose names were obscure. Not that the name of Ronalds was no longer heard in a city where it had been conspicuous for four generations—for it was in many mouths these days—but the only home that George Ronalds could afford for his family was among those of whom the world never heard.

He went up the three flights of stairs and let himself into a dark and deserted hall. The telephone-bell was pealing.

He waited a second to see if anyone else intended to answer; but no one came, and he went to the instrument. It was Gladys; she asked sullenly for her mother. In reply to her father's statement that there seemed to be no one at home, she said,

"I'm staying at aunt Lelia's to-night."

Then she hung up before her father had finished saying,



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"Why Nan, these are the real Kum-a-parts, I'll say you are up to the minute."

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"Yes, dear; I'll tell them."

He went into the sitting-room and turned on the lights, then into the dining-room and did the same, then into the kitchen to see if the stupid and incompetent servant could possibly have dinner ready. She was always late. The servant was not in. He remembered that this was Thursday and that she did not return on Thursday evenings. He found some stale rolls and some butter. There was nothing else. He sat down at the kitchen table and prepared to eat. The door-bell rang; it was his neighbor O'Malley, the paper-hanger. O'Malley haltingly explained that Mrs. O'Malley had seen Mrs. Ronalds and the girls go out, and, later, the maid, and that she had made bold to send up a bit of dinner to Mr. Ronalds, as she knew how men liked their food hot.

"Now, this is awfully nice of your wife," George Ronalds said, feeling very touched by another's thought of him. "And as soon as I have finished with it and a little work that I brought home with me from the office, I'll drop in on you and thank Mrs. O'Malley."

It was a simple but very delicious dinner that his neighbor had brought him, much better than he was used to having at home, and he ate hungrily. Of course, he reflected, this kindness meant that people knew how he was neglected by his wife and daughters. But his pride no longer cried out; he didn't seem to care. He was grateful for the sheer physical comfort that the good food brought him—glad to feel a certain surge of vitality and courage in his body.

He went into the sitting-room; on the table was a box of cigarettes, belonging, he supposed, to his wife or one of the girls. He smoked eight, one after the other. He thought of Frederick Smith, of the professions of grief that Lelia Smith still made for her husband's death, of the engagement, just announced, of her son to the little Deacon girl—an orphan with a large fortune running into the millions. He thought of Aline, sulky and restless by turns, going out every afternoon and evening with young men whom she met always at her friends' houses or at her aunt's—never here at home.

Again the telephone-bell rang; a society reporter at last had a query to put to Eunice Avenue, the street to which the Ronalds had drifted.

Was Mrs. Ronalds in? Or Miss Aline Ronalds? No? Possibly this was Mr. Ronalds? Yes. This was Miss Baird speaking, of the *Tribune*. Could Mr. Ronalds tell her anything about his daughter's engagement to Mr. Stuart Grayson? Nothing—except there was no such engagement and there would be none.

Miss Baird was sorry to have intruded; it was her business to run down these rumors. He would let her know first, would he, if such an interesting announcement should be forthcoming?

George Ronalds went back into the sitting-room. He wondered if such a thing could be in the air. Stuart Grayson was eight years older than himself—No; it wasn't to be thought of.

Laura? When George Ronalds thought of her, he was glad of one thing only: that he had not died as his brother-in-law had done, in order to leave his wife the money for which his life, two years ago, had been insured.

Gladys? She had been his dearest, and her bitterness had been like an icy wind. He could not understand the daughter whom he had taught to ride, who had been his companion from her childhood—hunting with him, playing golf or bridge, or motoring, or walking whenever he had the time.

The door-bell rang. He wondered if his wife could be coming home to keep him from a lonely evening. But it was only a man who looked like a tramp and whom he had never seen before.

"I want to talk to you, Mr. Ronalds. May I come in?" the man said.

George led the way into the sitting-room.

"Now tell me what I can do for you," he asked, and smiled a little, suddenly remembering how little he could do for anyone.

"My name is Rogers—K. H. Rogers; I guess you've heard of me," the stranger ventured, and added: "I knew your brother-in-law, Fred Smith, before he ever hit this town. Didn't he ever tell you about me?"

Slowly out of the past a chance remark floated back to George Ronalds's mind: "The keenest man I ever knew was a fellow named Rogers. If he had been honest—or even careful—he would have been one of the richest men in the country. But he was as crooked as they come." That was all.

Rogers continued, in the face of the other man's silence:

"I've a record; the federal government sent me up as an example about five years ago. My name was Bellevs then." George Ronalds gave a start. Bellevs? Of course he had heard of Bellevs. "But Rogers was the name that Fred Smith knew me by, and I'd hoped he'd said something to you about me that you might remember—that might make you inclined to trust me."

"He said you were the keenest man he ever knew; I remember that."

Rogers was silent for just an instant; then he began again.

"Look here: I've made half a dozen fortunes—and lost them. I was too adventurous. I liked fooling people. I went too far. It was a sort of game with me—beating the laws, getting away with things that other men would not risk. I could always map out big schemes and talk people into backing them; but the sport is all gone out of that sort of life for me. I'm a sick man. I want money again; I mean to have it. I'm going to make one more play for it. I won't live very long if I get it. There's a little boy, though, that I want to provide for, and I'm willing to take a big chance again for his sake. If I get caught, I'll go back to prison and write a book about the fools I've met—maybe I'll last long enough to finish it, maybe not; but it won't be much worse than the sort of life I'm living now."

He stopped and put a hand over his mouth. Then he began to cough. George Ronalds knew that the stranger had told the truth about his being a sick man, and he waited, a little excited, to hear more.

"I've come to you, Mr. Ronalds," Rogers continued presently, "because I know what you've been up against. I want you to get hold of some money—you can do it; you are still trusted. I want you to steal the money if you can't borrow it, and I'll make us a fortune within six months. I'll make enough within a month to give



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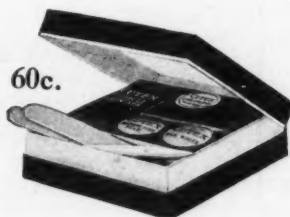
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you back ten thousand dollars—that's the sum I want you to get for me right away."

George Ronalds wondered a little why he sat still and let a strange man talk to him like this. Rogers talked on—

The O'Malleys decided about ten o'clock that Mr. Ronalds would not come in that evening, and went to bed.

Harold Shaw drove very swiftly out to Eunice Avenue. He didn't want to talk, and he pretended that the car needed all his attention.

"Rotten streets out this way," he mumbled presently, to break a pause that had become almost unbearable, "and I've lost the way again."

Laura Ronalds kept unpleasantly silent. But when they were almost at her corner, she said,

"Drive on out; don't stop yet."

"Why?"

"I want to talk with you."

They passed the city limits and took a road into the country. He did not speak immediately, but, after they had covered a considerable distance, he turned the car out to one side, stopped the engine, and dimmed the lamps.

"Now go ahead," he said, lighting a cigarette.

"I'm going to get a divorce," she announced.

He was silent for a moment; then he spoke coldly.

"It always looks rotten to leave a sinking ship."

"People don't go down with sinking ships if they can help it."

"You know what I mean—for a woman to divorce her husband because he's gone broke."

"That isn't the reason. You know it. For two years I've stood the most miserable poverty a woman ever faced—"

"Oh, come now!" he interrupted.

But she continued desperately:

"And I've tried to bear it without showing too much how I hated it. The girls and I have had to give up everything that we care for. Lelia has done practically nothing for us except to give them a few clothes. And there's nothing I can do. No business that I know anything about—"

"Yes, yes, Laura; you've told me all that a thousand times. It was nasty luck—having your husband lose his money—I know; but why talk about it to-night? It's late—"

"Oh," she exclaimed bitterly, "are you unwilling even to listen to me?"

"Not if you've anything to say. If you simply want to talk about what you've had to bear, yes. I'm tired of hearing your lamentations. Other people have lost their money suddenly. You are not the only woman who hasn't everything she wants. Why don't you try to make the best of it?"

She would not speak for a moment. He threw away his cigarette impatiently. Then her words came hurriedly.

"Well, I wanted to tell you that I'm at the end of my rope. Aline is going to marry Stuart Grayson. Teddy is engaged to Viola Deacon. Lelia has asked Gladys to live with her after his marriage, and Aline and Stuart have asked me to stay with them. They don't really want me—that is, he doesn't—but I intend to do it for a while." She paused.

"I suppose you'll be more comfortable," he said slowly. "Grayson hasn't a great

deal left, you know, but, of course, Aline will be able to give you a more luxurious home. Yet—" He paused.

"I think," she said firmly, "that you will have to give me a home sooner or later." He was silent. "Not that it would be what I once had," she continued, "but it, too, would be infinitely more luxurious than Eunice Avenue."

"Do you really mean this?" he asked.

"Unless the idea is completely repugnant to you," she answered sharply. "You know very well that we've been talked about for a year. There are people who think that I'm treating my husband very badly and that you are treating him badly. We can't pick up spilled milk, but we can put a rug over the spot. I'm no longer important enough to be forgiven—to have people overlook gossip—and you're not important enough, either, even if you are a man."

He knew that what she said was true. George Ronalds still had friends—friends who had begun to look at Harold Shaw in a way that he could not misunderstand, men whose good will he did not want to forfeit were making their disapproval plain. Only that morning his uncle had taken the trouble to summon him to say, "George Ronalds has trouble enough."

That had been all; but it was enough. Now Harold felt that, if Laura got a divorce and went to live with her daughter, there would be a great deal of criticism perhaps—but it was infinitely better for him that such criticism should come to a head and then die out, when the divorce was no longer a matter of interest, than for them to continue a course that would inevitably result in a scandal involving both. Suppose that George Ronalds should get wind of their affair and himself ask for a divorce.

But, if she managed it herself now, afterward, if he, Harold, continued to be seen with her, nobody could properly object. There would be no husband to draw sympathy.

"I suppose the only thing for you to do," he said, "is to get the divorce as soon as Aline is married. You can't go on like this."

"And afterward, you and I—" she began. But he touched her hand.

"Let's wait and see what happens afterward," he said. "You know how things are between us; let's have a little faith in each other."

"I've no faith in anybody," she replied.

"Then you'd make a very annoying wife," he said irritably. "I'm thinking of you, and not of myself," he continued. "Suppose somebody else came along and wanted to marry you—somebody with a real fortune. You might feel that you'd had enough of me."

"Let's go home, Harold," she said wearily; "we won't talk any more about it. I'll arrange with George about the divorce, and then, later, you can have the honor of marrying me if you want to; and I'm afraid there will be nothing else for either of us to do. The water's gone over the dam."

She felt that he had not been as opposed to the divorce as she expected. She knew how selfish he was—what a distaste he had for the dregs at the bottom of the cup, and, although their intrigue had become tasteless to her, she had decided that marriage with him was the one way out of her unbearable poverty.

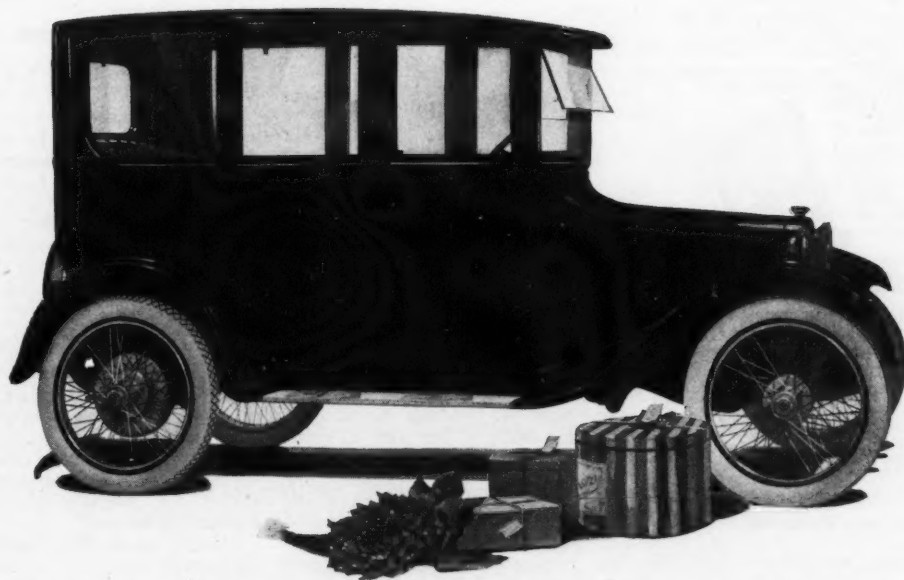
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They drove back to the house on Eunice Avenue in silence.

It was twelve o'clock when she entered and found her husband sitting beside the table, his eyes bright and excited. At first, she thought that he had been drinking.

"Hello!" he said, a little stupidly.

"Where are the girls?"

"I don't know," she answered briefly.

She went into the bedroom and took off her hat and cloak; then she returned. She had better tell him now, she decided.

"I want to talk with you, George," she said. "I haven't had a chance to tell you about Aline. She told me this morning that she has promised Stuart Grayson to marry him—"

"Nonsense!" he broke in. "She'll do nothing of the sort!"

She looked at him coldly;

"I'm afraid that you have nothing to say about it," she continued. "I think she is doing the only possible thing. A girl without a penny can't pick and choose. Stuart Grayson will make her a very good husband. He has position—money—"

"I've known Stuart Grayson ever since I was born," he interrupted; "we won't go into his qualifications. I won't let my daughter marry him; that is all there is to it."

She was silent. His thoughts suddenly raced back to Rogers—to the things that Rogers had promised him.

"I wonder if Lelia would lend me ten thousand dollars?" he said suddenly.

"I'm sure she wouldn't," Laura answered carelessly; "she wouldn't lend me seventy-five dollars to pay a bill with to-day."

"I don't want you to ask her to do that again," he said. "If you have bills that can't wait, I'll try to get the money at the bank; they don't mind advancing it on my salary. Besides, I can borrow it if necessary. Don't go to your sister."

"You were talking just now of asking her for ten thousand dollars yourself," she replied, and laughed mirthlessly.

"That is different. It is for an investment."

"I'm afraid that Lelia has no faith in your business judgment, George."

He rose.

"That means that I'll have to get the money some other way, somehow," he said.

She decided not to discuss the divorce to-night.

III

ALINE married Stuart Grayson four months later. Her father attended the small wedding at her aunt's house, but he refused to give her away. Her mother assumed that office. After the bride and her husband had left the house and it was all over, George Ronalds and his wife and their other daughter met in a small sitting-room up-stairs.

Laura wished to tell him of her plans for the future—of Gladys's decision to live with her aunt, of her own determination to ask for a divorce.

The evening had been a poignant one for him. He had found that his wife spoke the truth when she told him that he would have nothing to say about the marriage of his twenty-one-year-old daughter. Aline had been so elated over the idea of again having money that nothing—not even her own tremors of reluctance—

could have forced her to give up the idea of becoming Stuart Grayson's wife. Her mother was frankly satisfied; it was not quite what she had expected two years ago, when Aline first had come out, but it would furnish some sort of refuge for them both.

"Now," said George Ronalds, "Aline is married and will have a home of her own—a better one than I have been able to give her lately—but now that she has left us, I hope we are going to be a little closer to each other." He turned to Gladys. "You and your mother are all that I have to work for or care for—and things have been pretty hard for you; I know that. I hope that they will be different now. I want to take you both away on a trip; I need a rest, and I want to go somewhere where we can begin all over again—where we'll get to know each other again in a way that we haven't for a long time. Then, when we come back, maybe we'll have a real home once more. Do you remember what partners we used to be, Gladys?"

Something in Gladys went out to her father; his appeal touched her heart, but her mother cut in icily.

"Don't talk sentimental nonsense, George. We will never have a real home again. If you'd held on to the money that you inherited, we might always have had something; but you lost that, and you know perfectly well that you're not a business man. The kindest thing that I can do, or that Gladys can do, is to relieve you of the responsibility of providing for us."

"What do you mean?" he asked dully.

"Mother," pleaded Gladys, "let's—"

"Don't be a fool," her mother told her.

"I mean, George," she continued, "that I am going to ask you to let me get a divorce. I am going to live with Aline and her husband; Gladys is going to live with her aunt."

"You want to break up our—home—like that?" he asked slowly, unbelievably.

"It's been broken up a long time; we might as well end the pretense of being a devoted family," she answered, her voice cold with irony.

"Is that what you want, too, Gladys?"

he asked brokenly.

"Yes," she answered, in a low, unsteady voice.

He went toward her.

"My poor child," he said, "have I failed—that badly? Doesn't your father mean anything at all to you any more? You want to leave him quite alone?"

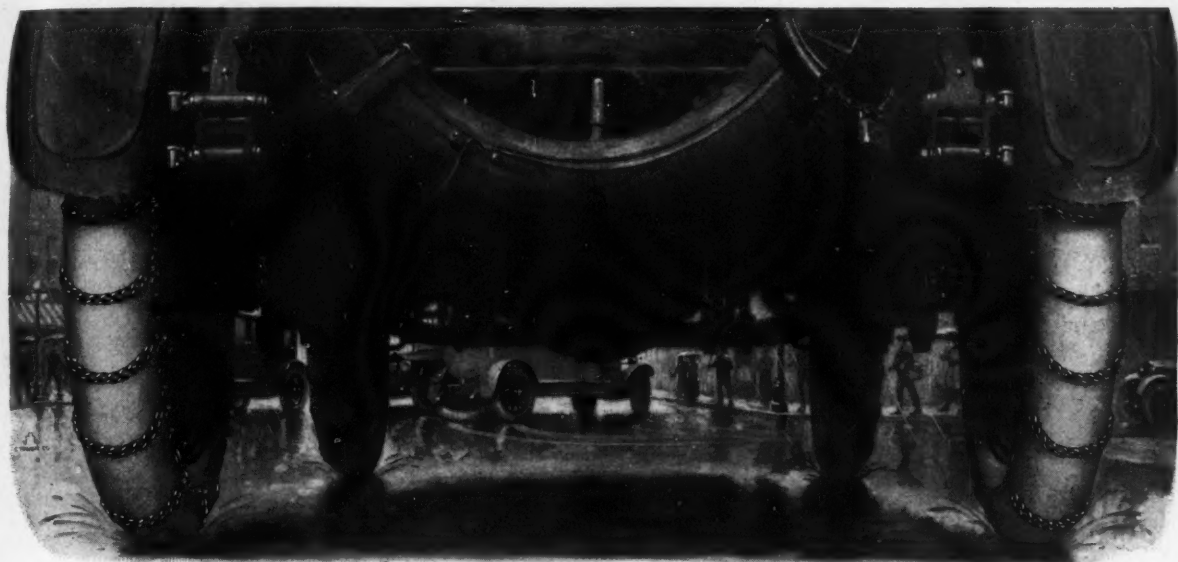
"Oh, father!" she cried, and sobbed for an instant on his shoulder. Then she grew calmer and glanced at her mother, who stood by the mantel, tapping the marble nervously with her long, shining finger-nails, playing a sort of tune with them. "It's like mother says," she explained tearfully. "It would be much better for you not to have us to take care of. We'd see each other—you and I—quite often. It's best—I—"

Her father led her to a chair.

"Sit down," he commanded, "and answer me. Suppose that I should be ill—and alone—"

"You're never ill, George," his wife interposed.

Gladys grew quiet. She had seldom wept since her childhood, but to-night she had felt her old love for her father revive.



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and a pity for his loneliness had swept over her. Aline's marriage had seemed to Gladys as distressing as it had to her father; thoughts of her own broken hopes came to haunt her as she stood, pale and grave, beside her younger sister at the candle-lit altar of roses and lilies, and heard the music from the muted violins and the romantic and beautiful words of the marriage service. How different if it had been Lord Charles Paisley and herself who were making those vows! George Ronalds had chosen an auspicious moment to appeal to his elder daughter's heart. He remembered Aline's curt dismissal of the subject of a wedding-present when he had mentioned it: "For heaven's sake, if you're going to give me anything, wait and do it after we come back. Aunt Lelia is buying my clothes for me, which is all she will do, of course; but I'd rather not be embarrassed by knowing what your gift is. I shouldn't like to tell Stuart that my father had given us a cream-pitcher or something like that, even though he knows that we are paupers." So he had not attempted to find a gift for her.

But Gladys? Gladys had wept and clung to him. She had felt compassion and tenderness for the father whom she and her mother were deserting; yet—

"You wouldn't expect to have me with you if I were married," she argued, "and aunt Lelia can do so much more for me. It isn't fair to ask me to give up the chance—"

She broke off, feeling that she was trying to be very generous, but that her father would not understand or appreciate it. There was a pause; then Ronalds said sharply:

"I never want to see either of you again as long as I live, unless you are willing to live as I live, *where* I live, willingly and dutifully—unless you will try to do your best, as I have tried to do mine, to make some sort of home for ourselves. Will you?" He looked first at his wife, and then at his daughter.

"No," said Laura. "I haven't the faintest intentions of returning to you or to Eunice Avenue. I am going to remain with Lelia for the present, and all I ask of you, now or ever, is to make it possible for me to get a divorce as quickly and as quietly as possible."

"Very well; you go. I suppose that you will want alimony?"

"Hardly. It would be too embarrassing to haggle over your salary in court. Anything that you care to give the children or me—"

He interrupted her.

"And you, Gladys?"

"I'll stay with aunt Lelia," she said dully; "but I wish you would try to understand—"

"Suppose that I give each of you a hundred dollars a month," he asked quickly; "will that satisfy you?"

"Don't do anything that you can't afford," his wife said, a little more graciously than she had yet spoken. "But I suppose your own wants will be very simple," she added.

"Come to Greeley's office to-morrow—call up and make an appointment at any hour that suits you. I will meet you there, and we'll settle about the money."

Without another word, he left the room and went out of the house. But he did

not go home. He passed a club of which he was still a member, and went in. Men who had not seen him for a long time amazed him with the warmth of their greetings. He sat, talking and smoking, with them until very late. He decided to stay at the club for the night. Eunice Avenue was rather far away. He'd have to do something about some clothes in the morning—but that didn't matter now. A half-dozen flasks were produced. He drank his fifth high-ball. They were all good friends. Good friends! They wouldn't have let him have ten thousand dollars without the best security in the world. Or they wouldn't have gone far out of their way to find a decent job for him—though he'd not have asked more salary than he was worth. But they were good friends; they liked him, and he liked them. Good will, companionship, pleasant memories, a good game, a good laugh—there wasn't much else in life; but, even at that, life was worth it—worth the chances, the risks, the disappointments. Only, you mustn't be too serious or too delicate about it all— He slept soundly.

In Greeley's office, the next day, Laura Ronalds signed an agreement releasing her husband from all further claims in consideration of his payment to her, at the beginning of each month, of the sum of one hundred dollars. Gladys signed no statement, but she heard the same sum assigned to both herself and Aline as long as they lived. It was a very formal conference; there were no pleas, no tears. But, presently, Mr. Greeley left them alone for a moment at George Ronalds' request. Laura and Gladys were a little uncomfortable; they hoped that he would not begin again. He didn't.

"I wanted to tell you both," he said "that, for the sake of my family, I lived instead of died. If I had done as another did, you would both have been wearing black for me, and weeping now and then. But I took the more difficult way—the honest way. Then you showed me pretty well how much you appreciated my efforts. And I took another way—a crooked way, this time. I stole some money—I went into a sort of partnership with a man who had been a criminal—not a bad fellow, though—To make a long story short, we made good; the money that I stole has been returned, and no one knows anything about it. I suppose you've heard of Bellevue—the man who built the famous Moorish palace in Florida, who was later sent to prison, and who has still more lately 'come back.' If you read the newspapers, you know about the new fortune that he is rolling up; but, of course, you haven't known that half of it is mine. I wanted to share it with you last night; but I won't try again—and that's all—except that I hope that you will both be very happy in your new homes."

He bowed to them and went out.

"It isn't true! It can't be true!" Laura kept repeating tragically.

"Father never lies," said her daughter coldly. "Come, mother; it is what we deserve. Let's go."

But Laura was crouched over the long polished table, where she sat, sobbing and striking the wood with her knuckles.

"The dog!" she cried. "The dog! To treat his wife and children like this!"

Cosmopolitan for December, 1920

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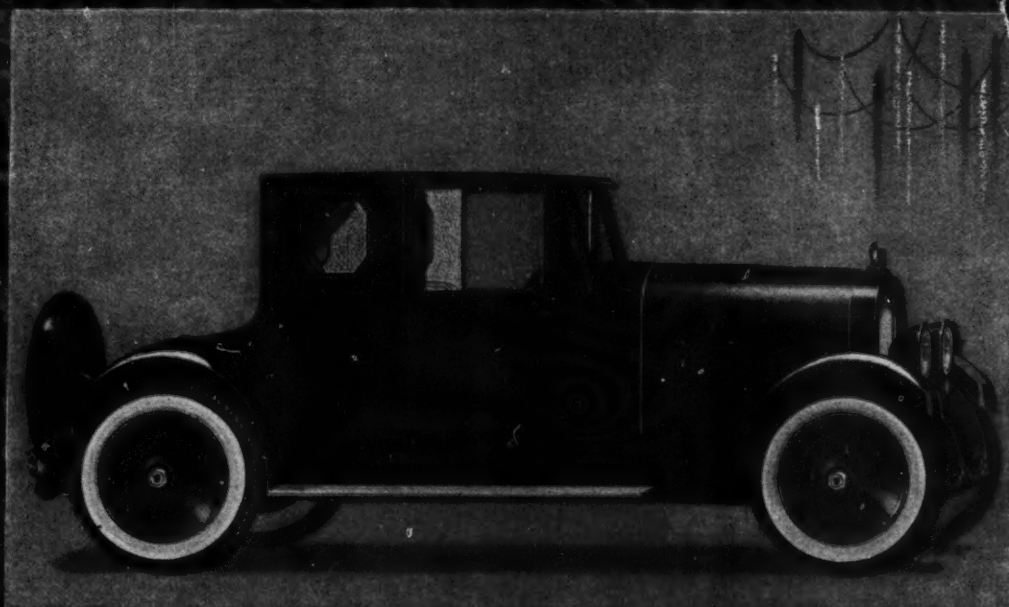
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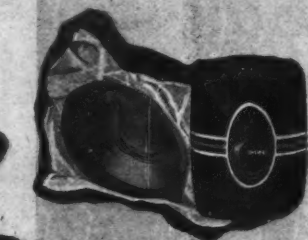
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Find the Woman

(Continued from page 64)

most brilliant men I know are paupers; some of the most stupid are millionaires."

"And vice versa?" suggested Clancy.

The judge shrugged.

"The brilliant millionaires are wealthy despite their brilliance. My child, money was never so easy to make—or so easy to spend. And those who make it are spending it."

"But isn't everyone spending, not only the millionaires?" demanded Clancy.

"It's the fashion," said the judge. "But fashions change. I'm not worried about America."

The curtain rose, cutting short Walbrough's disquisition. But, for a moment, Clancy pondered on what he had said. "The Land of Easy Come." The people that she had met, the moving-picture millionaires—theirs had come easily—Would it go as easily? Even David Randall, worth approximately half a million before his thirtieth birthday—she'd read enough to know that brokers went bankrupt overnight. The hotels that she knew were crowded almost beyond capacity with people who were willing to pay any price for any sort of accommodation. The outrageous prices charged—and paid—in the restaurants. The gorgeous motor-cars. The marvelous costly clothing that the women wore. Some one must produce these luxuries. Who were paying for them? Surely not persons who had toiled and sweated to amass a few dollars. Easy Come! Her own little nest-egg, bequeathed to her by a distant relative—it had come easily; it had gone as easily. Of course, she hadn't spent it, but—it was gone. But she was too young to philosophize; she forgot herself in the performance.

She was throbbing with gratitude to the Walbroughs as, the opera over, they slowly made their way through the chattering thousands toward the lobby. They had given her the most wonderful evening of her life.

She was about to say something to this effect when some one accosted the judge. For the moment, he was separated from the two women, and verbal expression of Clancy's feelings was postponed. For when the judge joined them, he was accompanied by a man whose mop of hair would have rendered him noticeable without the fading bruise upon his face. It was Zenda!

His recognition was as quick as Clancy's. His dreamy brown eyes—one of them still discolored—lighted keenly. But he had been an actor before he had become one of the most famous directors in Screendom. He held out his hand quite casually.

"Hello, Florine!" he said.

Walbrough stared from one to the other. "You know each other? 'Florine?'"

"A name," said Clancy quickly, "that I called myself when—when I hoped to get work upon the screen."

She breathed deeply. Of course, Judge Walbrough and Zenda didn't know that a woman named Florine Ladue was wanted for Beiner's murder; but still—

"On the screen?" That's funny," said the judge. "Sophie Carey told us that you were thinking of stenography until she put you in touch with Sally Henderson. Huh! No fool like an old fool! I was thinking I would put a new idea in your



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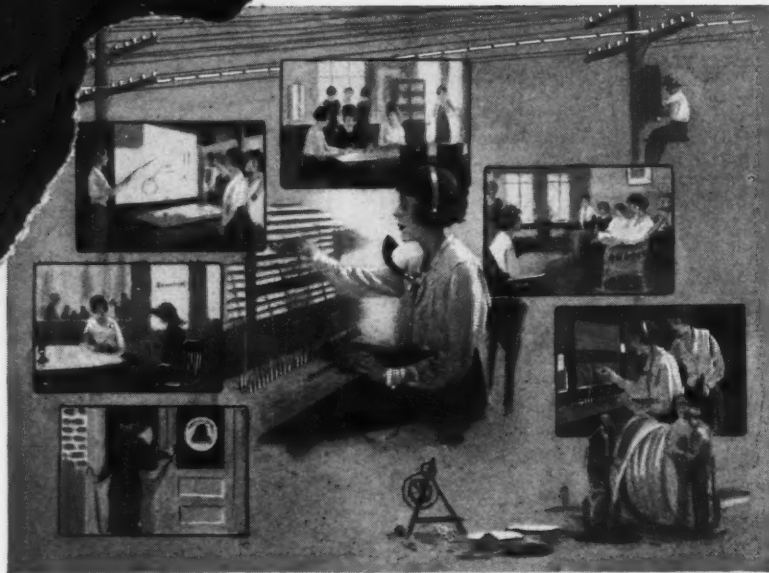
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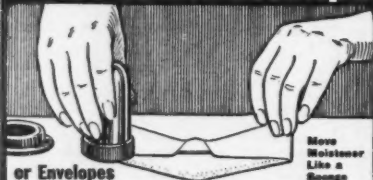
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head, and you have it already. Darcy stopped me and introduced his friend Mr. Zenda, and I immediately thought that a girl like you with your beauty—" He interrupted himself a moment while he presented Zenda to his wife. Then he turned to Clancy. "Couldn't you get work?" he asked, abruptly.

They were on the sidewalk now, and the starter was signaling, by electrically lighted numbers, for the judge's car. It was a clear, crisp, wonderful night, and the stars vied with the lights of Broadway.

Clancy looked up and down the street. She had no intention of running away. She'd tried to reach Zenda to-day, and had been told that he was too ill to receive visitors. Nevertheless, the impulse to flee was roused in her again. Then, listening to reason, she conquered it.

She answered the judge.

"Get work?" I didn't try very long."

"And she didn't come to me," said Zenda. He put into his words a meaning that the Walbroughs could not suspect. Clancy got it.

"Oh, but I did!" she said. "I've tried to get you on the telephone. Central wouldn't give me your number. I wrote you a letter in care of Zenda Films. Your partner, Mr. Grannis, opened it. And to-day I called at your apartment and was told that you were ill."

Zenda's face, which had been stern, softened.

"Is that so?" he asked.

The judge, a trifle mystified, broke into the conversation.

"Well, she seems to have proved that she didn't neglect you, Mr. Zenda. Don't see why she should go to such pains, unless"—and he laughed—"Miss Deane wants to prove that she played fair—didn't give anyone else a prior opportunity to make a million dollars out of her pretty face."

"Miss Deane can easily prove that she is playing fair," said Zenda.

"I want to," said Clancy quickly.

Walbrough was a clever man. It was pardonable in him not to have suspected earlier that there was some byplay of talk to whose meaning he was not privy. But now he knew that there was some meaning not understood by him in this talk.

"Here's the car," he said. "Suppose you ride home with us, Zenda?"

"I have some friends. If you'll wait a moment—" And Zenda was off.

In silence, Clancy entered the judge's limousine. Then Mrs. Walbrough, settling herself comfortably, suddenly patted the girl upon the hand. She was a keen woman, was Mrs. Walbrough; she sensed that something was troubling Clancy. And the judge cleared his throat portentously.

"Miss Deane," he said, "I don't know your relation to Mr. Zenda. But, if you'd care to consider yourself my client—"

"Thank you," said Clancy.

Then Zenda reappeared. He crowded himself into the car.

"I just telephoned my apartment, Miss Deane. The door-man went on at noon and stays until midnight. He says that a young lady answering your description called on me to-day."

"Did you need verification, Zenda?" asked the judge angrily.

Zenda shrugged.

"In a matter involving a hundred thousand and more, corroboration does no

harm, and my obtaining it should not be offensive to Miss Deane."

"Oh, it isn't, it isn't!" said Clancy tremulously.

The judge's eyes narrowed.

"I must inform you, Zenda, that Miss Deane is my client," he said.

Zenda bowed.

"I couldn't wish a better adviser for Miss Deane. Farar was in excellent voice to-night, didn't you think?"

No one challenged the change of subject, and until they were settled in the Walbrough library, the opera was the only subject of discussion. But, once there, Zenda came to business with celerity.

"Judge Walbrough, I have been swindled in a poker game, in a series of poker games, out of thousands of dollars. Last Monday night, we caught the man who did the cheating. There was trouble. Miss Deane was present at the game, in my apartment. She came as the guest of one Ike Weber. She disappeared during the quarrel. It has been my assumption that she was present as the aide of Weber. At the Star Club, on Tuesday, I stated, to associates of Weber, that the man was a swindler. Yesterday, I was told that he intended bringing suit against me. So I have denied myself to all possible process-servers on the plea of illness."

"Why? If the man is a swindler——"

But Zenda cut the judge short.

"I can't prove it. I don't want scandal. Suit would precipitate it. If I could get proof against Weber, I'd confront him with it, and the suit would be dropped. Also, I would recover my money. Not that that matters much. Miss Deane, why did you come to see me?"

Clancy drew a long breath; then she began to talk. Carefully avoiding all reference to Morris Beiner, she told everything else that had to do with Zenda, Weber, and Grannis. The judge spoke first after she ceased.

"I don't get Grannis's connection."

"I do!" snapped Zenda. "He's been trying to get control of the company—I'm not nearly so rich as people think I am. The company has a contract with me for a term of years at no very huge salary. I expected to make my money out of the profits. But now we've quarreled over business methods. If he could get me entirely out, use my name—the company has the right to—increase the capitalization, and sell stock to the public on the strength of my reputation, Grannis would become rich more quickly that way than by making pictures. And the quicker Grannis broke me, so that I'd have to sell my stock—every little bit helps. If Weber won a million from me——"

"A million!" gasped Walbrough.

Zenda's voice was self-contemptuous.

"Easy come, Judge," he said. "I'm an easy mark. Weber had a good start toward the million, would have had a better if it hadn't been for Mrs. Zenda."

"It's an incredible story!" cried the judge.

"What's incredible? That I should gamble, and that some one should swindle me? What's strange about that in this town, Judge? In any town, for that matter?"

Clancy, eyes half closed, hardly heard what they were saying. How easy it would be to confess! For, what had she to confess? Nothing whatever of wrong-



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doing. Then why had it not been easy to call on Zenda the first thing on Tuesday morning and tell him of Fay Marston's involuntary confession? Because she had been afraid of scandal? Her lips curled in contempt for herself. To avoid doing right because of possible scandal? She was overly harsh with herself. Yet, to balance too much harshness, she became too lenient in her self-judgment when it occurred to her that only fear of scandal kept her from confessing to Vandervent that she was Florine Ladue. That was a different sort of scandal; also, there was danger in it. No; she could not blame herself, because she kept that matter quiet.

"And you'd advise me to keep it out of the courts, Judge?" she heard Zenda asking.

"If possible," replied the judge. "It will do you no good. The mere threat of it will be enough. Offer Grannis a fair price for his stock, deducting, of course, from that price whatever have been your poker losses to Weber. For the two are partners, unquestionably. Tell Grannis that, if he doesn't accept your offer, you will prosecute both Weber and himself for swindling. That's much the better way."

"I agree," said Zenda. "But I haven't the cash to swing Grannis's stock."

"Plenty of people have," said the judge. "In fact, I have a client who will take that stock."

"It's a bet," said Zenda. He rose briskly. "Can't thank you enough, Miss Deane. Will you be at the offices of Zenda Films to-morrow morning with Judge Walbrough?"

He turned to the judge and arranged the hour, then turned back to Clancy.

"And as soon as that's settled, we'll make a test of you, Miss Deane."

He was gone in another moment. The judge stared at Clancy.

"Little girl," he said, "if it weren't so late, I'd give you a long, long lecture."

"You'll lecture her no lectures, Tom Walbrough," said his wife firmly. "Hasn't she put you in the way of an investment for a client? You'll thank her, instead of scolding her."

The judge laughed. "Right enough! But I will give her advice."

"And I'll follow it," said Clancy earnestly.

And she did. But not to the extent of doing as age, or proven experience, or ability advised her. She would always act upon the impulse, would follow her own way—a way which, because she was the lovely Clancy Deane, might honestly be termed her own sweet way.

XXI

WHEN she and Judge Walbrough—the Walbroughs sent their car for her at nine-thirty—arrived in the offices of Zenda Films, they were ushered into an inner office by the same overdressed youth who had shown Clancy in there yesterday.

The meeting that loomed ahead of her was fraught, she believed, with tremendous dramatic possibilities. Of course, none of the people who would take part in it knew that she had visited the office of Morris Beiner, yet she might be called again by the name 'Florine' in the presence of some one who knew.

Zenda was already there, seated at the

large table. At the far end of it were Weber and Grannis. There were no introductions. Zenda greeted the new arrivals, and merely stated:

"Judge Walbrough will act as my attorney. If you want a lawyer, Grannis, you, of course, are entitled to one."

Grannis grunted unintelligibly. Zenda drummed a moment on the table with his slender fingers. Then he spoke.

"I won't go over everything again, Grannis. I've the goods on you. I've plenty on Weber, too. Judge Walbrough is prepared to offer you, on behalf of a client, seventy-five for your stock."

Here the judge nodded acquiescently. He opened an important-seeming wallet and withdrew a check.

"I went to the bank first thing this morning, Zenda," he said. "It's certified. Three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars for half the stock—five hundred shares."

"That's correct," said Zenda. "It doesn't take account of my poker losses, but"—he leaned toward Weber—"I'm not going to slug you, Ike. I'm not going to sue you. I'm not going to do anything. Not now. But, so surely as you stay in this town, so surely as you mix into the film business *anywhere*, I'm going to land you in jail." He turned to his erstwhile partner. "I haven't much to say to you, Grannis. The judge is offering you a price that's fair, considering that he's deducted about what you and Ike trimmed me of from his offer. That's O.K. I'm willing to let his client in, sort of at my expense, in order to get rid of you. Now, do you accept?"

Clancy held her breath. But Zenda and Grannis must have held some earlier conversation this morning or last night. For Grannis produced a sheaf of engraved documents. He put them on the table. Zenda reached for them and handed them to the judge. The latter examined them carefully, then nodded in acceptance.

"The certificates are properly endorsed in blank, Zenda. It's all right." He pushed across the table his certified check. Grannis took it. He rose and looked uncertainly at Zenda.

The film-director met his glance fairly. "You're a pretty wise bird, Grannis," he said slowly. "But it isn't *really* wise to double-cross your friend and partner."

That was all that was said. Grannis and Weber had left the room when Clancy suddenly remembered something.

"The ten thousand dollars they gave me!" she cried. "Have you returned it?"

She had given it, for safe-keeping, into Walbrough's hands last night.

Zenda laughed.

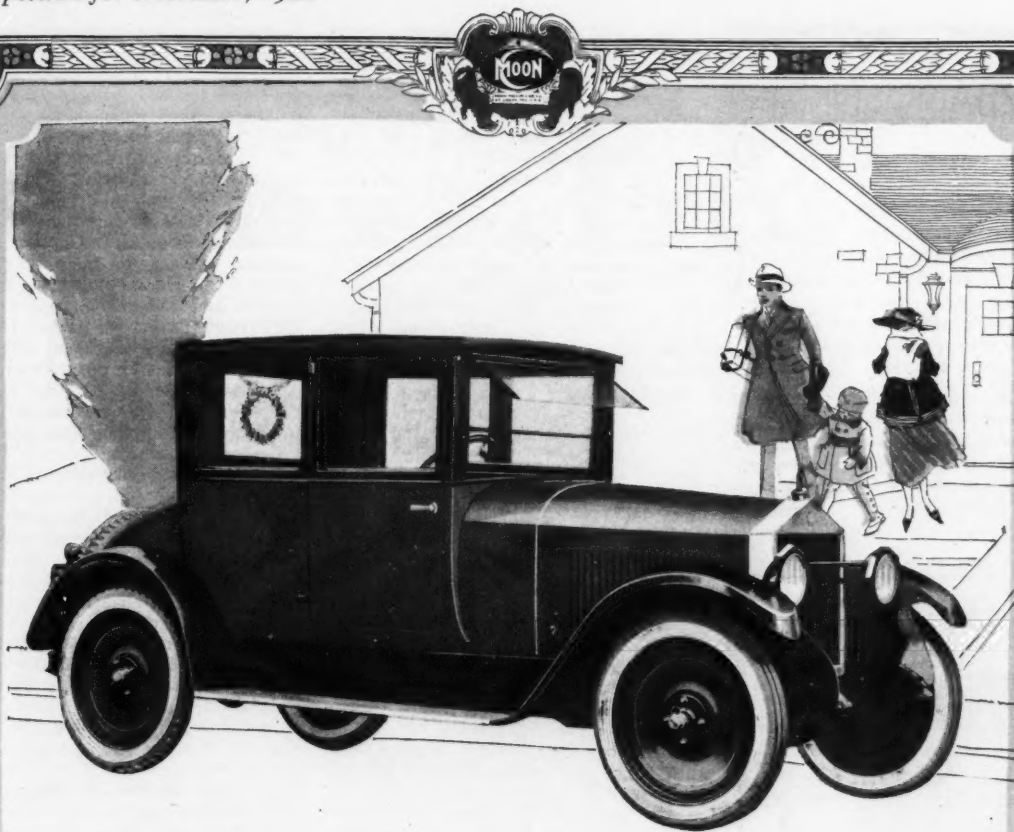
"My dear Miss Deane," he said, "I've lost scores of thousands at stud to Grannis and Weber. That ten thousand dollars is my money. That is, it *was* my money."

Clancy stared at him. The judge chuckled.

"Considering that your evidence saved Zenda from a nasty lawsuit, that it ridded him of a crooked partner, that it gave him a chance to continue his business with a partner who will not interfere with him, both he and myself agree that you are entitled to that ten thousand dollars."

Clancy had been pale as wax. But now the color surged into her cheeks.

"For simply doing what I ought to do? No, indeed!" she cried.



Actual Photograph of the Six-48 Coupe

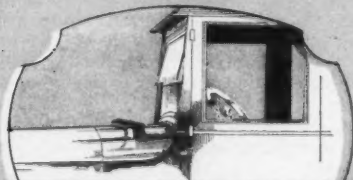
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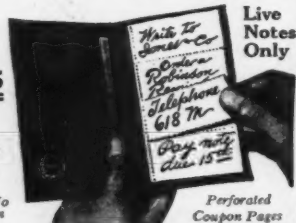
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Nor could their united protests move her. Zenda finally ceased. An idea struck him. He beamed upon her.

"You said, last night, that you had film ambitions. Well, Miss Deane, here's my chance to repay you."

Her eyes lighted.

"Oh, I don't want you to feel that——"

Zenda scribbled upon a card.

"Take this to the studio. Johansen will make a test of you. He'll do it right away. On Monday, you telephone——"

"And then begins the big career!" cried the judge. "Well, well, Miss Deane; I shall expect to see Zenda Films advertising the newest star all over the city. Eh, Zenda?"

Zenda smiled.

"I can always use a pretty girl with intelligence," he said. "Miss Deane is certainly pretty and just as certainly intelligent. If she screens as well as I hope——"

His unuttered promise seemed to open the gates of Fortune to Clancy. She hardly knew afterward what she said by way of thanks. She only knew that Judge Walbrough insisted that she use his limousine—stating that he himself was going to take the subway down-town—and that Zenda wrung her hand warmly, and that, a moment later, she had descended in the elevator and was in the big motor, on her way to the East-Side studio of Zenda Films, Incorporated.

In the car, she managed to collect herself. Once again she saw herself the peer of the famous women of the screen; she saw herself famous, rich. Oddly enough, she thought of David Randall. She wondered how he would feel if he knew that she was on the threshold of international fame. For she never doubted it. She knew that all she needed was opportunity.

Johansen, a thin, bald, worried-seeming Swede, eyed her keenly with deep-set blue eyes. He was in his shirt-sleeves, superintending the erection of a "set." But he ceased that work and summoned a camera-man. The Zenda command caused all to put themselves at her service. Johansen even superintended her making-up process, of which she was abysmally ignorant. Also, he rearranged her hair. Then he conducted her to the "set" which he was erecting.

There was a table in the middle of the scene. Johansen instructed her. He put a letter on the table.

"Now, Miss Deane, you enter from the left there. You're kinda blue, downhearted—see? Then you spy this letter. You pick it up. It's for you, and you recognize the handwriting. It's from your sweetie—get me? You smile. You open the letter. Then your smile fades away and you weep. Get me? Try it. Now, mind, it don't really matter if you can act or not. Zenda wouldn't care about that. He could teach a wooden image to act. It's just your registering—that's all. Ready? Camera!"

In Zenith, when she had played in the high-school shows, Clancy had been self-conscious, she knew. And here, with only a bored assistant director and an equally bored camera-man to observe her, she was even more self-conscious. So she was agreeably surprised when Johansen complimented her after the scene had been taken.

"You done fine!" he said. "Now let's try another. This time, you come in from the right, happy-like. You see the letter

and get blue. You read it and get happy. Got it? Shoot!"

She went through the little scene, this time with less self-consciousness. Johansen smiled kindly upon her.

"I think you got something," he told her. "Can't tell, of course, yet. The screen is funny. Prettiest girl in the world may be a lemon on the screen. Same goes both ways. But we'll hope."

But this couldn't dash her sense of success. She rode on air to Sally Henderson's office. Her employer was not there. Clancy had telephoned before meeting Walbrough, asking permission to be late, and also apologizing for not having returned to the office the afternoon before.

"Miss Henderson's gone out of town for the week-end," young Guernsey, the too foppishly-dressed office-manager, told her. "She left this for you."

"This" was an envelop which Clancy quickly opened. It contained, not her discharge, which she had vaguely expected—why should her employer write to her otherwise?—but twenty-five dollars, half a week's salary. And Clancy was down to her last dollar!

"We close at one on Saturdays," Guernsey informed her. He himself was beating the closing-time by three-quarters of an hour, but Clancy waited until one o'clock. Then she left. She called upon Miss Conover, but the plump, merry little dressmaker had nothing ready to try on her newest customer.

It didn't matter. Nothing mattered. Zenda had caused a test to be made of her—and Clancy Deane would be upon the screen!

She wondered just what sort of parts Zenda would give her. Of course, she'd have to begin with little "bits," as Fanchon had called them. But soon—oh, very soon!—she'd work up to great rôles. She wanted emotional parts; she felt that she could bring to the screen something new in the way of interpretation. All the Clancys of the world, whether it is acting or writing or singing that they wish to do, feel the same.

She took in a matinée in the afternoon. She supped, in lonely splendor, at the Trevor. And, equipped with a novel, she went to bed early. But she could not concentrate. Her mind wandered; and it didn't wander to the mystery of Morris Beiner's death, or to the possibility that some one in Vandervent's office would definitely decide that she was Florine Ladue, nearly so often as it wandered to the Zenda studios.

She had fooled Philip Vandervent yesterday. Grannis and Weber had passed, so she believed, out of her life. Why should she worry? She had done no wrong. Resolutely, she refused to fret. Instead, she went off to sleep, prepared for rosy dreams. She had them, but the awakening was not so rosy.

Mrs. Gerand, who, by request, roused all her lodgers on week-days, permitted them to slumber as late as they chose on Sundays. The lodging-house, usually from seven o'clock until nine a noisy place, filled with the bustle of departing men and women, was silent as the tomb on Sunday morning. And Clancy slept until eleven o'clock, to be awakened by the landlady.

"I hate to do it, Miss Deane," she apologized, "but when letters come by special messenger, they're important as telegrams, I think. So I brought this up."

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Clancy, sitting up in bed, took the note from Mrs. Gerand's hand. After the landlady had gone, she opened it. And then she put her head upon the pillow and wept. For Zenda had written:

DEAR MISS DEANE:

I am at the studio, where I had them run off your test of yesterday morning. You see, I didn't waste any time. And I'm sorry to tell you that you won't do for the screen. One cannot explain it. Your skin, your features, your hair—everything about you is beautiful. And you have brains. But the camera is a tricky and unreasonable thing. All of that beauty and charm which is yours fails to register upon the screen. I cannot tell you how sorry I am, and I shall be only too glad to let you see the test yourself, so that you will not possibly doubt my good faith. If, in any other way, I can be of service to you, please command,

Yours faithfully,

ZENDA.

All her illusions were shattered. She didn't wish to see the test. She believed Zenda.

Slowly her sobs ceased. She had no lack of courage. Also, she was young, and youth turns from defeat to future victory in a moment's time.

Carefully, as she bathed, she removed the traces of tears. Dressed, she breakfasted at the Trevor. Then, feeling more lonely than she had ever felt in her life, she went out upon Fifth Avenue. Groups of people were entering a church a block away. She was not a particularly devout young person, but she had been a regular churchgoer at Zenith. She walked up the avenue and into the church. She expected

Find the Woman is certainly a record-breaker for thrills and lively narrative. Clancy Deane's keen wit and intuition have so far kept her from being enmeshed in a net of extraordinary circumstantial evidence. The next instalment, in *January Cosmopolitan*, tells what happened when she is confronted with an apparent eyewitness of her visit to Beiner just before he was killed.

A Rival to the Prince

(Continued from page 57)

first squad, the Prince of Wales, kept step accurately and slanted his rifle in perfect alignment over his right shoulder.

It was thus that he marched out of sight.

III

DAN feared to look at the girl who sat by his side. He had been so much affected himself by the drama of the thing he had just witnessed that he was afraid to meet the glorified reflection of it which he was sure he would find in her romance-awakened eyes.

Every glance but his own was strained after that vanishing column. Dan's was away, anywhere but at the vision of his lost happiness.

Suddenly, the emotional tension of the crowd broke. Under the leadership of a few timid initial shouts, a tremendous roar went up. In mid-career, it stopped as if a hand had been placed over the mouth of each person there.

For something had occurred—one of those things which are the shame of our speed-mad American public. The flimsy, hastily-built reviewing-stand, crowded beyond its safe capacity, began to sway and then, almost silently, it seemed, collapsed to the ground, throwing up a little whirl of dust like the smoke of an exploding shell.

It didn't seem, at first, like anything more

no consolation there; a girl or boy of twenty who can acquire consolation from religion is not exactly normal. Age turns to religion; youth away from it. But she did manage to forget herself in the solemn service, the mellow music.

Emerging, she envied the groups that paused to chat with each other. In Zenith, she knew everybody, would have also stopped to exchange comment and gossip. But here—she had failed in her great ambition. The rest was makeshift, a stop-gap until—until what? She didn't know. Vaguely she wondered where Randall was. Probably hundreds of miles beyond Chicago now.

And then, as she crossed the square, her heart leaped. For she saw him reluctantly descending the steps of her lodging-house. She quickened her pace. He saw her. His reluctant tread also quickened. Unmindful of the drifts, Randall plowed across the street and joined her. She wondered why he had not started on his Western trip.

And then Clancy's heart, which had been beating joyously with a gladness that she did not quite understand, seemed to drop to some region inches below where it belonged. For, coming round the corner of Thompson Street—no, not coming, but stopping as he perceived her—was Spofford, the dyed-mustached detective of Vander-vent's office. And with him was a shorter, slighter person. Fear aided recognition. He was the elevator-man of the Heberworth Building, who had taken her up to Beiner's office last Tuesday afternoon.

than just being lowered to the street-level in a lightly descending parachute. People were laughing, hysterically perhaps, as they went down. A row of falling dominoes would have made almost as much commotion. Then the mass of debris became a scrambling ant-hill. Men, women, and children trampled over each other in an effort to get away.

Dan landed on his feet in some way and looked round for Irene. He could not see her, and he searched frantically. He heard her call to him, "Dan; oh, Dan, help me get up!" She must be near and on the ground.

Then the rush began. He tried to stem the tide of humanity as it swept him away.

It was no use. It was like fighting stampeded cattle, and the end of his efforts found him out in the street with the mob. The dust was still hovering over the ruin when he went back with a sinking premonition in his heart that Irene was still there.

She was. A timber had fallen across her which had pinned her to earth, and her eyes were closed.

With frantic energy, he started to remove the beam which held her down. It was a job for four men, but he heaved it off somehow. Love and fear gave him strength. He knew that her happiness mattered above all other earthly things, that he would give his life just to have her

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continue to live, to have her partake of those things of life she had not yet tasted.

Tenderly, he lifted and carried her clear of the wreckage. Once, during the trip, her lips moved, and she whispered something he could not catch, and her arm tightened a little round his neck where he had placed it. That was all. Then she sank back limply in his arms once more.

At the hospital, they diagnosed it as internal injuries, incurred chiefly when she was trampled on by the frantic crowd.

"She may recover," the surgeon said, "but it is about an even break. Some little urge toward life would turn the tide favorably. Without it, there is little hope."

Dan spent his second sleepless night at the hospital. Irene had no relations that he knew of, and he was her nearest friend.

Along toward morning, the nurse came out to the corridor for him.

"She wants you," the nurse told him.

"Me?" Dan echoed.

"She wants some one," she explained, "and I thought it must be you. You had better come in and see, anyway."

Dan stood at her bedside. In some way, she was conscious of his presence, and her fluttering fingers on the coverlet found his hands. With a sigh, she let them rest there without opening her eyes.

"I knew," she whispered almost inaudibly, "that you would come back. If you hadn't, I should have died."

Dan brought her fingers reverently to his lips. He imagined that the prince would have done that, and it was with never a pang that he made his supreme effort to play up to the part which had been involuntarily assigned to him. If it meant her life, he would be a prince or anything else that was required. For a long time, he sat by her bedside, holding her hands. Finally, she dropped off to sleep.

When the surgeon came back in the morning, she was still unconscious, but with some changes for the better, he said. He made Dan go and get some rest, but he returned in the afternoon. She was still in a state of feverish insensibility, but quieted down again when, subconsciously, she knew that he was there.

It was a week of ceaseless vigilance, a campaign fought as much by Dan as by the doctors. He had to tell the attendant about the deceit he was practising. Otherwise, she might waken sometime and find out that he had lied. That might do her physical harm.

One morning, when he arrived at the hospital, they told him that her fever had gone down and her mind was clear.

He almost hated to go in to her. It would be difficult to lie to her now with her eyes open. But he must.

Irene was lying, white-faced and thin, with her eyes closed just as he had last seen her, but, at the tread of masculine feet, she opened her eyes, saw him, and smiled wanly. He thought he saw her looking beyond him at the door as if she expected some one else to come in.

"They said—" she began.

"He had to go away," Dan lied. That off his chest, he plunged in more boldly. "But he said he would write," Dan continued.

That was all the falsehood he had to perpetrate that day. They talked of other things for a few moments, and then Irene showed signs of fatigue, and he left her without kissing her hand—for the first

time since she had been hurt. And, for the first time since that terrible day, Dan suffered again from the perfectly normal human pangs of envy and jealousy. It was long into the night before he resolutely fought them down and devoted himself to the hardest task he had ever undertaken.

The following day, when he went to the hospital, he was to be further harrowed by a more radiant Irene. They had a desultory conversation about trivial things. Irene finally showed him a telegram she had received. It was from a Canadian city and said:

MISS IRENE GREER,
 Brownley Hospital,
 Dodge City, Michigan.

Hope you are much better. Shall always remember what a peach of a time I had with you.

PRINCE OF WALES.

That was all, rather discreet and formal, Dan opined, but that was doubtless the way with princes. At any rate, it had made Irene absurdly happy.

"Pretty swell, isn't it?" she said, smiling—the old smile.

"Great!" Dan echoed. "I'll bet you're the only girl in America who ever got a telegram from a prince."

The next day she had a letter, written upon hotel stationery from the same city. She showed him the envelop, but not the message this time.

"I imagine you can guess about what he said," explained Irene, with a mouse-like smile. "Isn't he a dear to spend so much time thinking of me?"

"Great! He sure is," Dan agreed, swallowing a lump in his throat.

This being confidant to a lady in love had its drawbacks. In studying back over his somewhat uneventful life, he could not recollect anything that had been harder to do.

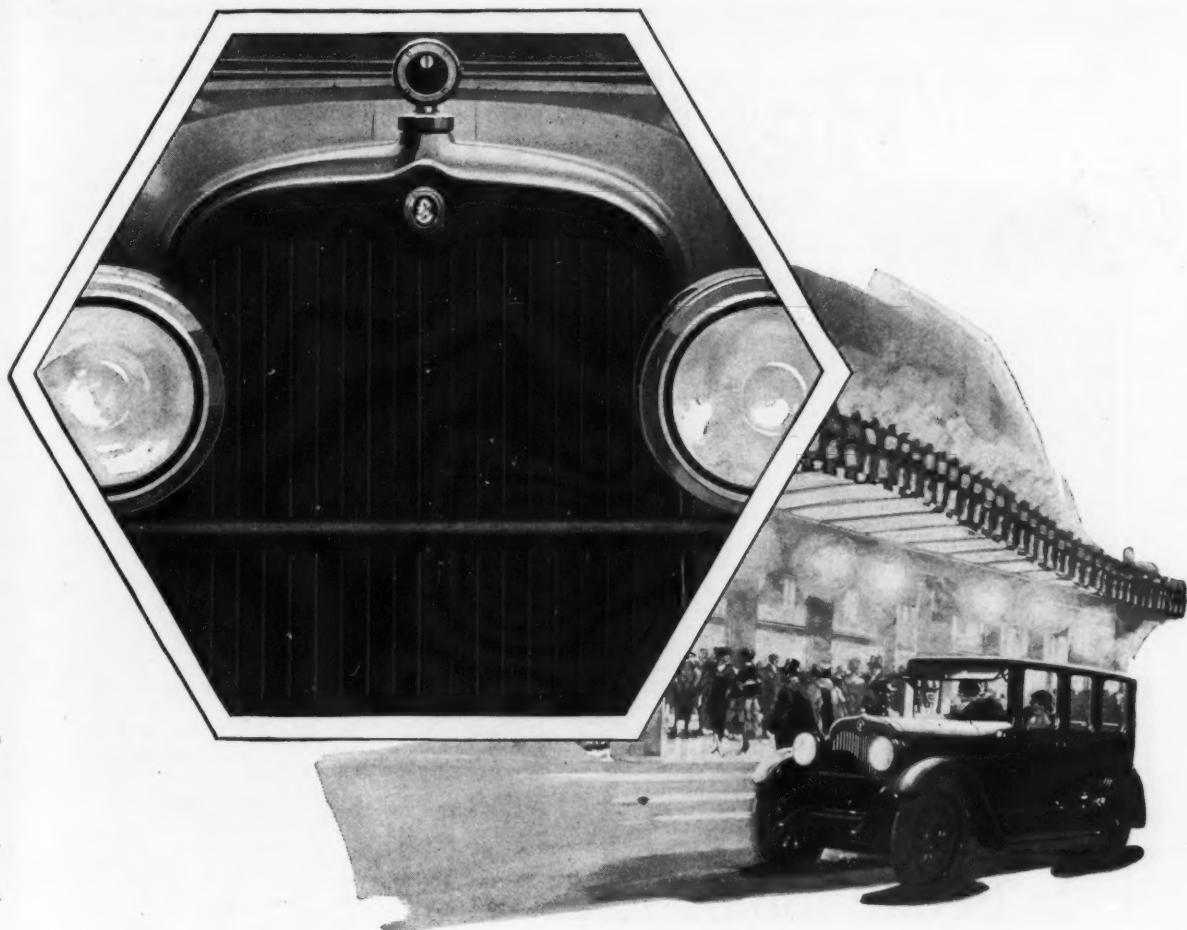
After the first one, other notes came at intervals from different cities along the prince's route. Sometimes she showed the envelop to him, and at other times she merely mentioned the fact that they had arrived.

The month that followed was a period of painful pleasure to Dan. She was absurdly dependent upon him, and he felt that he might never again have so good an opportunity to serve her, to show by deeds the love which he was so clumsy in expressing in speech. Sometimes he fancied that she was happier, that she was beginning to forget. Then, if no letter arrived for a few days, she would mention it, and he knew that she hadn't forgotten at all. It hurt.

But almost always she would receive a line from the prince within a day or two afterward. And then, for a while, Dan would go through a kind of hell that poets and women never know. Because, after all, it must be easier to yearn for something you know not what than to know exactly what you want and to be positive you never can have it.

IV

THERE was a settlement to Irene from the city on account of damages. Thanks to Dan, this financial reparation was prompt and ample. And the president of the refrigerator company was keeping her job open for her until she was well.



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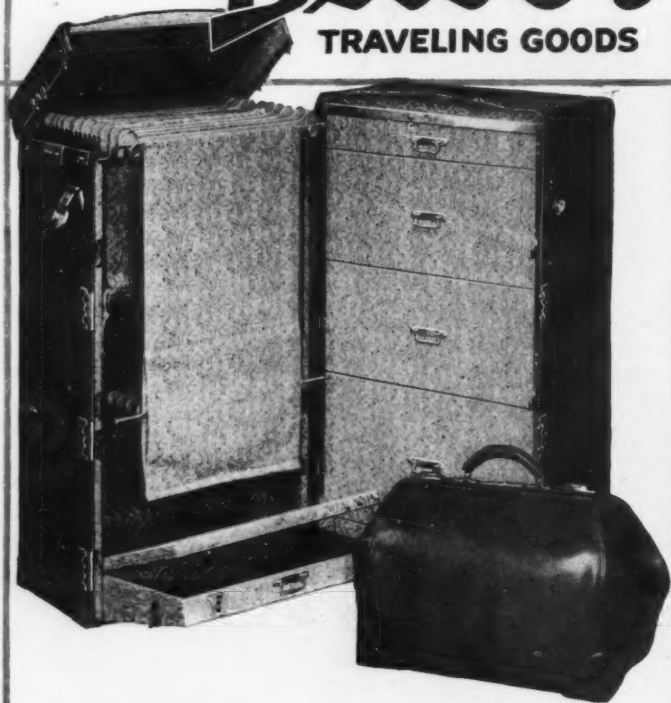
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It was a month before she could leave the hospital, and Dan, of course, was the one to take her home.

He had a taxi-cab waiting at the door of the hospital. It was the beginning of autumn.

"Let's go for a little ride in the country," she suggested wistfully. "It's so beautiful, and I've been cooped up so long. That is, if you can afford it."

"Of course!" Dan assented. "I've had a raise in salary, and I haven't a blessed thing to do with the money—and probably never shall have," he added, under his breath. She heard and smiled.

She asked that they stop on the summit of Sugar Loaf—yes; there is a Sugar Loaf near Dodge City, just as there is one near your town.

"Tell the chauffeur to go for a walk," she proposed. "I want to stay here just for a little while and take it all in." When the man had gone, she turned to him. "Am I going to have to ask you to hold my hand?" she demanded.

Even then, he made no move, said nothing. The words refused to come.

"I—" he began, and then, "Suppose that—it isn't necessary to be kind to me," he finished lamely.

"You may kiss my fingers," she suggested, "if you haven't any more nerve than that—just as you did in the hospital."

But Dan didn't do so, and she went on: "Dan dear, an Englishman doesn't speak of 'a peach of a time'—don't you know that? It's pure Americanese."

Dan blushed painfully.

"I never studied—"

"Thank God you didn't, or perhaps I never should have found out what a really wonderful prince you are."

He found her slim pale hand in his palm, and his fingers started to close over it, but he checked them.

"Do you remember when you were a kid," Irene went on, "when you first found out that it wasn't really Santa Claus who brought your Christmas happiness, but, instead, that it was your own father and mother?" Dan nodded dumbly. "And do you remember that you were a little disappointed at first to discover that it wasn't a sort of a fairy-story, but how, after you had thought about it a little, you were—oh, twice as glad to find that your happiness came from the dear, tangible people who loved you and whom you could love back instead of from some distant imaginary being?"

Dan held her wasted fingers against his cheek and pressed them so.

"I think you loved them more, perhaps, because they had created that moment of fairy-land for you. But you would never have cared to go back—to exchange the dear, tender reality for the dream. Won't you unlock the door and let me have that place in your heart that you've kept all swept and dusted for me this long time that I haven't been awake enough to know I belonged there?"

When the taxi-driver came back to find out if his meter was still alive and ticking, he went away again without looking at it and sat down in a clearing whence he had an excellent view of Dodge City.

But he didn't admire the view much.

He was wondering gloomily if his half-package of cigarettes would last until dark.



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Star-Dust

(Continued from page 78)

A high-bosomed young woman, with a powerful mezzo-soprano that pulled her mouth to a rhomboid, sang Santuzza's famous aria from "Cavalleria Rusticana," stopping suddenly at some unseen signal. "Fine, strong voice of resonant tin!" said Visigoth, under his breath.

A throaty young tenor sang "Ride, ride, Pagliaccio" through to the sob, anticipating it with a violent throw of body.

Then Trieste took the piano, running downward an avalanche of quick chords, the sepia-outlined head of Auchinloss gone meanwhile from the stage, and, down somewhere in the sea of dirness that rolled through the auditorium, Lily could see his profile etched into the twilight.

Very suddenly, Zoë was down-stage, and through the cymbals hitting into Lily's consciousness, the voice finally came through to her, flowing so easily on the beautiful, the tried old theme of the aria of Michaela, that she had the feeling of great ribbon bolts of every color winding about and not even half unflung as they struck the topmost places.

How true her flight!

Zoë sang through without interruption, so that, when she had finished, the timbre lay like a singing wire on the silence.

Somewhere between the ecstasy of the elbow that pressed against hers and the ecstasy of her child's voice still trilling on the black silence, Lily was conscious of movement. The gray silhouette marching down the aisle of gloom. A group up about the piano. Another chord struck out. Zoë's voice skipping upward in grace-notes. Vague, indeterminate passings of figures through a fluid of unreality.

Then, somehow, they were out again into the gloom of wings and then on to the white, incredible humdrum of the side-street, standing there beside the little door marked "Private," Bruce at her side.

"Lily, you've won!"

She felt sillily inclined to laugh.

"I seem to have, don't I?"

"She's a flute! She's a lark! She's a dream! I—I don't believe I seem to take it in."

"Nor—I."

Then Zoë joined them, an air of assumed composure belied by the flaming brilliancy of her eyes and cheeks.

"Why didn't you come up afterward?" she said, forcing a commonplace, and, to Bruce, "Hail a cab, pretty—please!"

He did, helping them in and poking his head in after.

"Where?"

"Anywhere. Let it be the park for a while, Lily?"

She nodded.

"Is three a crowd?"

For answer, Zoë drew him in by the sleeve, and, on the jouncing-off of the cab, was in her mother's arms, covering her cheeks with close-pressed, audible kisses, and both of them crying.

"He—he didn't say much, Lily. Kissed my hands—told me to live beautifully and work endlessly. I'm to go back to-morrow. They're discussing things now—he and Maestro—something about a five-year contract—but a great deal of red tape first—board-meeting. I'm to be a secret until next season. Maestro cried—"

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and Auchinloss— Lily, you need never be afraid for me—you hear—you hear—never! Lily—it's happened! And you did it! Lily, kiss me!"

"You darling! You're like a queen—all the little lives that go into the making of your cloth of gold, yet each proud to be ever so humble a party to it!"

"Lily, you're sad! On my day, you're sad!"

"Glad! You're the meaning of everything. The road had to lead somewhere. Everything is so clear now. You're the lovely meaning, Zoë, behind all the circumstances that went to weave you."

Only half plumbled, Zoë sprang from her mood, flashing, with all the amazing coquetry that was so new to Lily, round toward Bruce.

"Well—what?"

"On the very day I've found you, I've lost you."

"To whom?"

"Fame."

"Nonsense!" she cried. And buried her face against her mother.

Persiflage rose.

"Skylark, when I become more coherent, I'll tell you how wonderful you are."

"Zoë dear, hadn't we better drive home?"

"Lark! Lark! I cannot go home now, Lily. Let's have a lark!"

Suddenly Bruce caught her by the dancing hands.

"Let's celebrate!"

"Let's!"

"We'll dine at Sherry's, dance at the Ardmore."

"Lovely! Lovely! I've never been to either."

"No, no, Zoë! Please! Your grandparents at home. Besides, it's war-time."

"Nonsense! Laugh while we may. Next month, this time. I'll probably be in the thick of it myself. Let's laugh to-day. Vote her down, Zoë!"

"Please, Lily!"

"Your grandparents, Zoë—they don't even know the news yet—"

"Lily, this once—"

"Not Sherry's, then, Zoë—a quieter—"

"Immense! I have it! Tarrytown. An opportunity to show you the place before you go. We'll drop this taxi and pick up my car at the garage. How's that?"

"What a duck of an idea! Oh la, la, la, la!"

And so, quite dumbly, Lily acquiesced, and by easy shift to the tan-upholstered car that ironed out all jolts, and a stiff breeze from the Hudson whirling softly against their faces, they were whirling out along quiet stretches, dusk coming down like a veil.

Seated between them, Zoë fell to singing, trilling highly and softly, her head bared to the wind, her tam-o-shanter on Bruce's lap, and Lily sitting silently by, with lids down against hot eyeballs.

Presently, lights began to come out along the river, like the gold eyes of cats.

"How cool your fingers are, Zoë! Like the petals of something."

"Lily, naughty man is holding back one of my hands on me."

"Lovely hands!"

"Naughty man!"

Silence.

"Oh, dear!"

"Oh, dearest!"

"That wasn't for you. That was a sigh."

"But I stole it."



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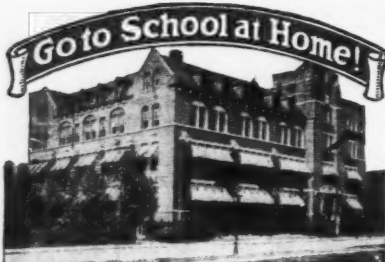
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"Cheeky!"
Giggles.

Silence again, and they turned off a macadamized road that was prematurely dark with trees and into a lariat of driveway that elicited from Zoë a squeal of enthrallment.

Even to Lily, though she had figured in its purchase, there was something startling in the vast classic whiteness and formal Italian chastity of the house as they flanked it, drawing up under a portecochère of Corinthian columns. Through a double row of cypresses turning black that enclosed a sunken garden, Dante and Vergil might have moved, and yet, Lily, aching with the analogy which could not conjure, could only call up rather foolishly the three-color magazine advertisement of a low stream-line motor-car drawn up before just such Renaissance magnificence.

They were met by Pauline—known to Zoë and her mother through perfunctory office meetings. She was exceedingly *petite*, rather appealingly so in her widowhood, and of her younger brother's rather Spanish darkness, except for a graying coiffure worn high and flatteringly.

There were seventeen years between them, and yet her shoulders were deeply white and rose, quite unwithered, out of a jetted evening gown, and her profile entirely without the sag of tired flesh.

A certain petulance lent to her exceedingly well-bred diction quite a charm, and she was playful and adoring enough to pinch her brother's cheeks as she tiptoed to kiss him.

"Nice boy to bring some charming people and save me from the boredom of dining alone! How's my handsome brother? Naughty boy! It's the first time you've looked yourself in weeks. They work him too hard down there, Mrs. Penny. I tell my fat brother he's become little more than an ornamental gargoyle. It's too sordid for this boy, and now you're running away from him, just when I had hoped the time was ripe for him to dabble in some of the things he's set his heart on. Shame on you for running away!"

Her twitter, from topical bough to topical bough, hardly demanded reply. She exclaimed over Zoë, admiring her extravagantly, and led the way, quite tingly regal, her running line of comment unbroken.

In a soft boudoir of French grays, French doors, cerulean blues, and a litter of every extravagant requisite of the toilet, Lily faced herself in a cunningly triplicated mirror.

"We're not dressed. We shouldn't have come"—trying to hide down her sense of misery.

"I'm dressed in all the cloth of gold you have woven for me," quoth Zoë, in mock grandiloquence, still pitched to her exultant key, and in all her youthful capacity for it, full of self.

There were gold-backed brushes with deep bristles that plowed her hair out into dust of gold, and a finely wrought amber comb, which she ran through the fluff, striking an attitude.

"She walks in splendor like the night—"

"Zoë, you're losing your head!"

"Splendor! This is me! Marble—terraces—rugs that slide! Only, I want

peacocks that strut—and tails that open like fans and—starlight—him!"

"Who?"

"Silly darling! Nobody—the world—life!"

There was no restraining her. She smoothed her mother's hair only to kiss it away again. She fluffed a fragrant cloud of powder along her neck. Stretched herself in the conscious pose of a *Récamière* on the lacy mound of a *chaise longue*, and finally followed her mother into the drawing-room, entirely at ease in the straight blue frock.

It was a room almost with width of the house, with a balcony at one end, hung in a shah's silk prayer-rug, and a stone fireplace opposite. Three sets of leaded doors opened out onto a flagged parapet that overlooked the Hudson and beyond the deep purple of perfect September.

They met, a little group, at one of these doors, and Lily noticed gratefully that Mrs. Enlow had thrown a net wrap over the formality of her evening gown and that Bruce had merely changed to flannels.

He smiled at her with that impersonal sort of kindness which could cause such a rush of blood to her heart, and spread himself in a playful salaam before Zoë.

"Princess!"

She held out her hand to be kissed, which he did five times, finger by finger.

"These terraces," said Lily, trying not to be heavy, "are like the setting for an *Ægean* romance."

He smiled at her again through the new film over his eyes.

"Write it, and I'll produce it."

"Close the doors, Bruce; it's growing chilly," said Mrs. Enlow.

"Yes," said Lily, shivering a bit; "chilly."

"And I'm warm!" cried Zoë. "How can anyone be chilly on a night like this!"

"Come, Princess, and I'll show you some stars."

"Don't wander too far before dinner, children. Mrs. Penny and I will sit indoors. Only youth can risk swollen joints."

"Yes," said Lily, feeling herself rather terrifiedly past the fiercer rush of life; "only youth."

They sat on a great overstuffed divan that faced the parapet, lighted softly at one end by the first lamp of evening.

"Why, you poor child, you're shivering of chill! It's the damp. Let me get you a wrap."

In the thickening silence, Lily sat looking out through the glass doors. Bruce and Zoë were silhouetted out there against a fathomless evening sky that was brilliantly pointed with a few big stars. But they were not looking out. Her face was up to his like a flower about to be plucked, and, looking down into it, his whole body seemed to sway to sweetness.

Suddenly, the ache in Lily's heart was laid. With all of her old capacity for the incongruous, but without any of her usual pump of terror, she thought suddenly of her father, two nights hence, sitting down to the cold salmon and fried potatoes on Page Avenue, hanging his napkin with the patent fasteners about his neck.

But with her gaze on those two etched and eloquent profiles, a piercing sense of achievement seemed to flow with a warm rush of blood, curing her of chill.

Her heart beat high with what even might have been fulfillment.

THE END

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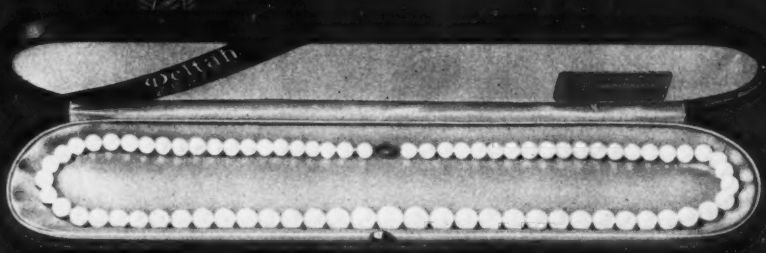




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Boomerang Bill

(Continued from page 69)

"The money? That's easy," Bill contradicted. "I'll bring it to you to-night."

Bill had forgotten—not that it would have made any difference if he had remembered—that he had changed his last five-dollar gold piece when he paid their fare to the beach.

"No, no; you mustn't. I can't let you do that," she protested.

For days, Boomerang Bill had been painfully muddling his brain in writing and memorizing a stiltedly eloquent proposal upon which, when he dared, he intended to risk his hopes of happiness. Now, with Annabel May in his arms, he forgot what he had planned to say.

"Annie, since the night I first saw you, I have loved you and wanted you always. You know that's God truth," he said gently. "If you care—if you'll marry me, we'll go to Arizona and make a home for mother—and ourselves."

Boomerang Bill saw the shell-like color of the girl's cheek deepen. Her hands caught and held his. Boomerang Bill, taking that for his answer, was satisfied. Hours later, when Annabel May was back in her cashier's cage and Bill was wandering the streets alone, with a happiness so great it awed him, he remembered that his entire supply of money consisted of less than five dollars.

"I'll turn a trick to-night—a big one and my last," he promised himself confidently. "In Arizona, I'm going to hit the square trail."

Whereupon Fate played another high trump, this time a glance from the vindictive eyes of Tony the Wop, who never had forgotten or forgiven the stranger who had humbled his Sicilian pride before the eyes of his lady-love.

"Damned New York Irisher!" he muttered vengefully, his wrath flaring into renewed hatred at the sight of his enemy as they passed on the street. "How does he get his dough, I wonder?"

The thought suggested a brilliantly attractive possibility. Tony the Wop began a quick canvass of Hayes Valley resorts in search of Detective-Sergeant Gotelli, his fellow countryman and friend.

Boomerang Bill, once more the gunman, turned slowly in the direction of a neighborhood branch bank which he knew would be open that evening.

As he got out his revolver and fashioned a mask in his room that evening, after having satisfied himself that the bank in question admirably suited his purpose, Bill realized, with perplexity, that he was as nervous as an amateur. He remembered that their "last job" notoriously is the "jinx" of all crooks.

"It won't be mine," he promised himself, and knew, as he spoke, that his promise was unbacked by conviction.

Boomerang Bill's warning premonition apparently belied itself. The hold-up was accomplished with his old-time nerve, precision, and despatch. It netted him a well-filled sack of gold and currency—more than he required. As Bill drove away in the car he had stolen for his escape, the touch of the coin-sack swung beneath his armpit thrilled him by its nearness, its sureness. It represented his power to give the girl he loved all she so desperately

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needed. Boomerang Bill was happier than he had believed any man could ever be. No disturbing qualms of conscience ruffled his utter contentment. Before him, and very near, was Annabel May and a home and a new life.

As he abandoned the car on a side-street and started homeward, Boomerang Bill was no longer Bill the experienced hold-up man, fresh from the robbery of a bank. Had he been, he would have avoided the streets in advance of the inevitable alarm, and hidden the damning evidence of guilt that hung beneath his arm—also the equally damning mask and revolver. Instead, following his thoughts, he turned straight toward Sam's Place, happy in anticipation of what he would see in Annabel May's eyes when he slipped the money to her across the counter.

Detective-Sergeant Gotelli, who had been told but a few hours before by Tony the Wop that Boomerang Bill was worth watching, saw him enter the restaurant. He had just received a description of the bank-robber. Bill filled it in every detail.

"It ain't possible that I can be this lucky, but I'll find out mighty quick," the policeman decided.

As the detective entered the restaurant, Bill, standing before the cashier's wicket, was in the act of drawing a sheaf of bills from his pocket. Gotelli tapped him on the shoulder.

"I want a little talk with you outside," he said.

Boomerang Bill's first surprised glance identified Gotelli as a police officer. Without a word or glance of recognition toward the wide-eyed, puzzled girl behind the cash-register, Bill turned quickly, even eagerly, into the street, with the detective at his side. The possibilities of escape did not enter his mind. His one all-dominating thought was that he must conceal his acquaintanceship with Annabel May, that he must protect her from the damning fact that he had been found in the act of sharing the bank-loot with her.

"Live around here?" questioned the detective.

"Yes."

"Working?"

"Not just now."

With another perfunctory query on his lips, the detective spied a suspicious bulge beneath Bill's coat and whipped it back, revealing the bank's coin-sack. In a second, the detective's gun was at Bill's breast. In another second, handcuffs were on his wrists.

Annabel May was troubled and anxious when, for the first time, Bill was missing when she left her work. In the morning papers, she found the solution and Boomerang Bill's picture.

"Oh, how could he?" she cried, horrified. And then, with quick understanding, she added gently, "It was for me."

Her natural horror at the discovery that the man she was to marry was in prison faded. In its stead, and born of the certainty that his love and her necessity were responsible, she found a new and greater tenderness for Boomerang Bill filling her heart and irresistibly pleading his cause. Women are like that—sometimes.

From his cell in the city prison, Boomerang Bill sent word to the detective chief that he was ready to plead guilty. The evidence against him was overwhelming.

The quicker it was all over the better. On the third day after his first great moment on the beach, Boomerang Bill had been sentenced to ten years in San Quentin Penitentiary. Then Annabel May went to him. As he was led into the jail reception-room, she sprang toward him.

"If I had known—if I had guessed," she whispered brokenly, as she clung to his arm, "you never would have done it. You are here because of me—because you care. Never, never, can I forget that!"

The sudden joy of great and unexpected happiness lighted Boomerang Bill's face.

"You don't hate me for what I did?" he whispered.

"Hate you!"

And, looking into her eyes, Bill saw that he had won instead of lost her.

"You will wait?" he asked humbly.

"I don't ask you to. I haven't the right to ask anything of you—now. I haven't the right to hope for anything, but—"

"When you come back, you'll find me—waiting," the girl interrupted. "Nothing and no one shall come between us. Then, if you'll give me now the only promise I shall ever ask of you, life will begin again for us both. Promise me, dear, you'll never again, even for me, try to get money you haven't earned honestly."

"Never again, so help me God!"

The next day, they took him to San Quentin Penitentiary.

Each week brought him a letter from Annabel May. He reckoned time by the thickness of the packet he carried always in the pocket he sewed within the bosom of his prison shirt. Twice a month he answered her letters—answered them in haltingly worded, painfully misspelled epistles that were written straight out of the heart of a one-woman man who bared his innermost being on prison stationery for the eyes of that one woman. Boomerang Bill was almost happy during these months, for his mind lightly skipped the numbing monotony of the prison in its fixed intentness upon a future rich with promise.

There were fifty of Annabel May's letters in Boomerang Bill's treasure-packet on the day when the yard-captain's runner silently slipped a pass to the visitor's reception-room into his hand as he worked with a thousand others in the clanking turmoil of the cloth-mill. The significance of the slip of paper fell upon him like a blow. Bill had made her promise never to visit the prison. And now she had come; for his visitor, he was sure, could be no one else.

In the reception-room, he found Annabel May. She came to him with outstretched hands and a cry of momentary joy that was stifled by the hopelessness of an indefinable something he read in her eyes. As on that other, so-different day at the beach, he asked, in alarm:

"Annie, what's wrong? Tell me quickly."

And, as she had at the beach, the girl answered,

"Mother."

"Not—not dead?"

Annabel May shook her head.

"Not that—not quite that, but I know—the doctor says it will be so very soon unless I take her to Arizona at once—now," she managed to say.

"I'll—"



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With the half-uttered, confident promise of aid on his lips, Boomerang Bill realized what he was and where. His eyes traveled to the guard lounging in the doorway, to the hideously striped clothes he wore, to the adamant prison wall just visible outside the windows. Each was a crushing reminder of the bondage in which he lived and must live for long years. The eager light in his eyes died as he covered his face with unsteady hands.

"A worthless, blundering, half-witted fool—that's what I am to be here like this when you need me!" he cried, revealing the depths of his self-contempt in each word. "Annie, I'd give my life for the money you need, and I can't cash it in for a single dollar!"

Annabel May caught his hand in hers.

"It isn't your fault, dear," she said. "You're here only because of what you tried to do for me. I'll never forget that or stop caring for—you because of it, but—"

The girl stopped. Boomerang Bill, sensing new and greater danger, squared his shoulders as if for a blow.

"You haven't told all. Tell me," he said.

"I came to tell you—to ask you—ask you if—" Annabel May covered her face. "Oh, my dearest, I can't, I can't—I won't!" she cried.

"Tell me," repeated Boomerang Bill. The girl struggled to speak.

"There's a man I know—a young mining engineer—and they're sending him to Arizona to work—and he wants me to— He says he loves me." The girl stopped and hid her face on Boomerang Bill's striped coat.

"Finish telling me," he repeated.

"I don't love him. He knows that, but he says I will—in time. He wants me to go with him to Arizona—and take mother—and marry him. I came to tell you."

"No; you belong to me. You promised to wait."

Boomerang Bill caught her by the shoulders with rough fingers that bruised her flesh. His eyes blazed with the inherent fury of a man animal who sees his true mate threatened by a rival.

"I know. It's so. I want to," she gasped, with scant coherence. Then, fighting for mastery of herself and of speech: "I came to ask you what I must do. You must choose for me. If I go—if I marry him, I break my heart and my promise to you. If I don't, my mother will die, and I will live knowing I killed her—I came to-day to ask you to choose for me."

Boomerang Bill made no reply. His face was a dull, deathlike gray. Minutes passed—minutes in which his filmed eyes saw the vine-covered cottage with Annabel May in the doorway and another man turning in at the gate to receive the welcome that was in her eyes. He struck his breast.

"No! Never!" he cried.

Two tiny hands caught and held his. Their touch killed the fierce unnamable something that had slipped the words past his lips.

"You have chosen? I am to say, 'No?'" the girl asked, her face as white and pained as her lover's.

During seconds, each age-long, they looked straight into each other's eyes. Then, suddenly, Boomerang Bill caught her into his arms, crushing her to his breast, as he kissed her hungrily, fiercely. Slowly he released her.

"Marry him. I've chosen for you," he said. This was the second of the three great moments of Boomerang Bill's life.

Three weekly letters—long, loving, devoted letters—had been added to the packet within Boomerang Bill's shirt since the day of his renunciation. Then in mid-week, as he returned to his cell at night, Bill found a fourth—and last. The lines blurred as he read:

MY DEAREST:

This is good-by. I must not write again, ever. I know you will understand why I must not. To-day I am yours. To-morrow we start, and I shall have lost the right to be, in heart and soul,

YOUR ANNIE.

Boomerang Bill threw himself on his bunk with Annabel May's last letter crumpled within his fingers. The "to-morrow" of the letter was now to-day—her wedding-day. Now, this instant, as he lay behind his steel-barred door, Annabel May was another man's wife. During that long night and the others that followed it, he learned, for the first time, all that imprisonment may mean to a man whose woman is beyond the power of his protection and love.

For days and weeks and months Boomerang Bill existed as nearly without hope as any man may be and live. But, by slow gradations, and because men must rekindle hope or die, he began again, at last, to look forward to a far-away future created by imagination at the command of necessity. Slowly, this fiction of his mind took on the vivid clarity of reality. He saw himself, a time-expired man, walking out of the prison gates—free. He saw the endless expanse of the southern deserts drifting past car windows. He felt the fierce heat rising from Arizona's unshaded plains. Then, as he lay in his cell, with pulse quickened by thrills of eager anticipation, Boomerang Bill saw himself hurrying toward a cottage, meaner, barer than the vine-covered haven of happiness of which he had once dreamed. In the doorway was a girl, slender and elfin, with gray-blue eyes. Always he was quite close before she recognized him—so close he could see every line of unhappiness in her face. And then, as she knew him, he saw her eyes light suddenly with welcome and love, and, stretching out trembling arms, she flung herself to him crying: "Thank God you have come at last! Take me away—somewhere—anywhere with you!"

Just there, always, the vision ended, and Boomerang Bill, turning back his mind like a clock, began again with his exit from the prison gates and relived the scenes of his hope-conjured visions.

And then, one day, so unexpectedly he almost doubted its reality, Boomerang Bill was granted a parole and actually walked through the great gates of San Quentin prison and became once more a free man. Straight, as he seemed to have done a thousand times in the darkness of his cell, he traveled Arizona-ward. He saw the trackless wastes of the cactus desert flit by; he felt the radiating heat of the treeless plains as he dropped from the train at the town to which Annabel May had gone.

The quick, duskless Arizona night had fallen before he located her cottage. It was more like the vine-covered cottage of his dreams than like the bare, meager one

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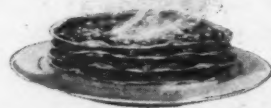
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of his prison nights. Light shone from the windows, but there was no waiting girl in the doorway to recognize and welcome him. So accustomed had Bill become to that imagined picture that her absence strangely disturbed him. He crossed the lawn, intending to knock, and then, within a step of the porch, halted suddenly. From within the house he heard gurgling laughter—a little child's laughter. A chill, cold as the rising night wind, fell upon his heart. A child's laughter had been no part of the conjured vision of his return. Silently he stole round the house and peered in through a window.

He saw Annabel May—a far different Annabel May from the one imagination had pictured. She was kneeling beside a cradle in which lay a little girl with her mother's soft flaxen hair but with eyes not gray-blue but an alien brown. The fiercely jealous animosity of a defrauded male animal curled Boomerang Bill's lips back from his clenched teeth, and in that first torturing instant of full understanding, he saw, in the brown-eyed, prattling child that lay in its mother's arms, something that had robbed him of more than life itself. And then, as she raised her head, he glimpsed Annabel May's face clearly in the full light. It was rounder, fuller, softer than memory pictured it, and flushed with the fulfilment of mother-love.

Gravel crunched on the walk; there was a step on the porch; the door was thrown open, and a man stood silhouetted against the outside blackness. Annabel May sprang to her feet with an eager, welcoming cry.

"My darling," she cried, "why are you so terribly late? You know little Annie simply will not go to sleep until you come."

Together they knelt beside the cradle, the man's arm tenderly clasped about Annabel May's waist.

Silently, Boomerang Bill stole away in the darkness. That was the third and last and most bitter of the three great moments of Boomerang Bill's lifetime.

The shabby pedler with his tray of cheap wares, the little Chinese girl clinging to his hand, the yellow mongrel following close behind, trudged on along the graveled walk of Plymouth Square. Boston Blackie's eyes followed them.

"Say, did you know Boomerang Bill in the old days when he was a crook—all white and not half Chink?" repeated the too-well-dressed youth at his side, a bit impatient at Blackie's abstracted silence.

"Know him? Yes; I knew Boomerang Bill when he was all white—which he is to-day," Blackie replied. "I knew him when he was a better man than either of us—which he may be to-day."

"But he must have a yellow streak," persisted the youth. "A prison jolt can't change a white man into that"—with a jerk of his thumb toward the pedler.

"Prison didn't make Boomerang Bill what he is," answered Blackie quietly.

"A baby with brown eyes that might have been blue, like Bill's own, did it. He lost everything that makes life livable, and has found in its stead what you see—a little Chink girl he calls 'Annie' and a yellow dog. They love him, and he lives for them. And he sells pencils, because once, long ago, he promised a girl he'd never turn another crooked trick. Yes, kid; Boomerang Bill's a man—a man of his word."

My Road to Faith

(Continued from page 24)

truth which nature has impressed upon me—that just so long as man considers himself the one and only chosen part of God, and therefore next to him in greatness, just so long will his egoism and self-conceit blind him to the greatness and glory of the real truth, and to the glory of the faith which might be his. I believe that Christ was a great teacher, that he was a great student of his times, and incorporated into his teachings all that was highest and best in the teachings of other great men who had lived and died before him. And I have always regretted that Christ was unfortunate enough to have for his historians a set of men who were unequal to their task, many of them narrow-minded, moved by "visions" and superstitions instead of facts, men who believed in all the miracles of the imagination from conversing with angels to stopping the sun, men utterly incapable of writing down calmly and truthfully those mighty teachings of Christ which, had they been written as they were spoken, would have meant so much for the world to-day. For I believe, in my own heart, that Christ was the greatest lover of nature that history knows of to the present day. I believe that in the many years of his "disappearance," Christ was not only studying the teachings of the past but that, close to the breast of nature, he was learning the splendid truths of life—all life—which were afterward the very heart and soul of his messages to mankind.

I believe that Christ, would he return to earth to-day, would say: "My biographers have given you a wrong impression of me, and they have misquoted me. What my soul was called upon to teach nineteen hundred years ago, they have clothed in the raiment of superstition, of misunderstanding, and of impossible miracles. For I am a man, even as thee and thine. But I have found the true faith. And that faith, as I told them then, depends utterly upon the dropping of the scales of self from man's eyes and his understanding of *all life*. For that I gladly died."

The greatest regret I have is that Christ, as a man, did not foresee more clearly the tremendous influence his teachings were to exert upon humanity through the ages. Had he guessed this, he would have written down with his own hand those teachings which were so carelessly left to the mercy of superstitious, frequently fanatical, and at nearly all times incapable biographers. For Christ, of all men who ever lived, was undoubtedly one of the best and the most humble. His teachings came straight from his heart. He did not intend that they should be smothered in hyperbole, metaphor, and rhetorical embroidery until no two living men could agree absolutely upon their meaning. I believe that he spoke simply and directly, for only in that way could he have reached the hearts of the masses. And I believe that the greatest of all his lessons was the lesson of humility. As a man, he had dropped his egoism, had submitted himself to the Master of all life, and in that submission he had found the truth, and the glory of a great faith. The misfortune of the humanity to follow in after-ages was that the world of Jesus

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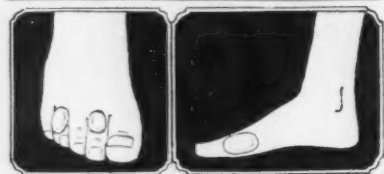
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Christ was small—so small that by word of mouth he could reach from end to end of it. Had he dreamed that there were still undiscovered worlds so great that, by comparison, his own was but a handful of dirt out of a wagon-load, I am convinced within myself that the world of to-day would not be struggling to understand a faith written in parables and riddles, for Christ would have set his own hand to the task which others so poorly accomplished.

I have, at times, heard intelligent people express amazement that I should dare to place human life on an equal level with all other life, that I should so "blaspheme the Creator" as to say that the life in a two-legged animal who can talk is the same as that in a flower or a plant or a tree or some other animal which cannot talk. I have sometimes allowed myself to point out the innumerable advantages possessed over man by many living things which have no language, as we know language. I could fill a dozen volumes with word-pictures of the thousands and tens of thousands of advantages which living things outside of man possess over man, and which, if man could achieve, would be stupendous miracles. But man, collectively, is blinded by his egoism to the marvelous attainments of all life that does not walk and talk as he walks and talks. When confronted by the incontrovertible wonder and apparent miracle of other life as compared with his own, I have nearly always found that men and women fall back, as a last resort, on the absurd and shallow argument: "But this other life you speak of has only instinct. It cannot talk; it cannot reason, and therefore it is impossible for it to have a soul."

And yet I know that such arguments as this, innumerable though they might be, cannot prevail until men and women bring themselves face to face with nature itself, filled with a willingness and a yearning to understand. They point out the pests of life—the serpent, the deadly insects, the plants that scar and poison; yet they cannot see themselves as perhaps the deadliest and the most relentless of all pests. If the world to-day were eliminated of human pests as each individual in the world might judge for himself, how many of us would be left alive to-morrow?

And always, when I have listened to the age-old arguments prompted by man's egoism and self-glorification, I love to return to the peace and the comfort of nature, whether that nature be in the form of a deep forest, a clover field, an orchard, or the little back plot of a crowded city home. And if I am where there is no cool earth to stand my feet upon, I find my peace and rest in the printed pages which describe that nature-world of mine. Nature's Bible is not hard to find. It is everywhere, living, breathing, printed—the one universal and ever-present Book of Life.

Whenever I think of the commonest of human arguments: "But this other life you speak of has only instinct. It cannot talk; it cannot reason, and therefore it is impossible for it to have a soul," there always comes to me the particular tragedy I am going to describe. The chief human actor in it was, in my humble estimation, one of the most physically perfect of her species. I will not give her name, but she is the daughter of one of the best known men in the nation and one of the foremost scientists of the world.

I think she was about twenty when my outfit happened to join trails with her father's in the Far North. She was athrill with life. She worshiped her father. She loved the sun, the sky, the wind, the trees, the whole world. Life seemed to have given her everything that it possessed—the rare coloring of the most beautiful flower under her feet, a form that was divine, hair and eyes that no artist could paint. She is, I have heard, beloved in her own environment. She is a worker for human betterment, and spends much of her time in actual work among the poor.

In the afternoon of the day we camped together, there was a sudden excitement. Three of the Indians had driven a cow moose, a yearling, and a bull into a small cover. It was a splendid chance for the girl. I can see her eyes glowing with the fires of excitement now, as she caught up her rifle and hurried with her father and brother and the Indians to the refuge-place of the family of moose. She was placed at the head of an open space, and the moose were driven out. First came the yearling calf, then the mother, and after them came the old bull.

The girl fired first at the calf, and then at the mother—and from that moment all that was big and beautiful and noble in life seemed to leave her own body and enter that of the old bull moose. For the first shot had struck the calf, laming it so that it could run but slowly, with the mother urging it on from behind. Not once in the moments that followed did the mother run ahead of her calf. And then I beheld a thing that I believe to be as noble as anything that man has ever done in all the ages. Believe, if you will, that the magnificent old bull had no reason! Believe, if you cannot sacrifice your egoism, that he did not think!

The old bull ran alongside the cow, alongside the calf, and then, by reason or instinct, he *knew* what had happened. He did not forge ahead. He did not race for safety, but deliberately he dropped behind, turned himself broadside, and stopped, making of his own splendid body a barrier in the path of the bullets.

I heard the girl's rifle cracking. Twice I saw the bull flinch, and I knew that he was struck. Then I heard her cry out, almost frantically, that her last shot was gone. Her brother ran up from the cover and thrust his own rifle into her hands.

"Give it to him, sis!" he cried.

The big bull had turned. He staggered a bit as he ran, but in a hundred feet he had overtaken the cow and the calf. The calf was going still more slowly, and in my desire to see the cow and the bull break away, I shouted.

Almost simultaneously with the sound of my voice, the bull stopped again. He placed himself broadside, at perhaps a three-quarter angle, so that, by turning his head slightly, he was looking back at us. He was directly between the cow and the calf, and the girl's bullets continued to rip into him. I remember that I cried out in protest, but she did not sense my words. Every fiber of her being was strung to the thrilling achievement of that crime. She was deaf and blind to the nobility of the great-hearted beast who, in my eyes, was deliberately sacrificing his life. Her father had run up, and brother and father cried out in triumph when the old bull sagged suddenly in the middle and almost

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fell to his knees. Four times he had been struck when again he went on.

From my experience in big-game hunting, I knew that he was done for. Yet, even in these moments when he was dying, the glorious soul of him was unafraid. Three hundred yards away, he stopped and turned again, giving the cow and the calf a last chance to reach the timber. The girl fired her last shots, and missed. Then the bull swung after the cow and the calf and disappeared in the cover. But, as he went, there came back to us a terrible, deep-chested cough, and my heart gave up its hope. It told me the heroic old bull was shot through the lungs. When I came up to them, just inside the timber, the three were standing in triumph close to the dead body of the bull. Hardly more than twenty paces from it was the yearling calf, dying, but not quite dead. The brother ended it with a revolver-shot.

And then I looked at the creature who had committed this double murder. Many times I had done this same crime, but with me, crude and rough, with all the inborn savagery of man, killing had not seemed quite so horrible. And standing there, a little later—red-lipped, her face aflame, her eyes glowing, exquisite in her beauty—the girl had her picture taken in triumph as she stood with one little booted foot on the neck of her victim.

When I hear of the vaunted human soul, and when men and women tell me there is no soul but the soul of a human, my mind goes back to that day. I might tell of a hundred other instances that are convincing unto myself, but that one stands out with unforgettable vividness.

I am sure, for instance, that the soul of a flower once saved my life. This is not unusual, or even remarkable, for the souls of flowers have saved unnumbered lives, as well as giving cheer and courage to countless millions. Take the soul of the flower away from us, and the world would be hard and bleak to live in.

To me, the soul is synonymous with life. I do not dissociate the two. When we breathe our last, our life—our soul—is gone. The two, I believe, are one. When we pluck a flower, we destroy neither, but when we tear it up by the roots so that it dies, then has its soul, or its life, gone the same way as that of a man who dies.

I have a case in point, so convincing to myself that all the preaching in the world could not change my sentiment in the matter. I happened, at this particular time, to be traveling alone in the Northland, and when a certain accident befell me, the nearest help I knew of was at a half-breed's cabin between twenty and thirty miles away. Like the most amateurish tenderfoot, I took a chance along the face of a cliff near a small waterfall, slipped, fell, and came tumbling down a matter of thirty feet with a sixty-pound pack and my rifle on top of me. In the fall, my foot received a terrific blow, probably on a projecting edge of rock.

The man who has faced many situations is usually the man who is cautious, and though I had just committed an inexcusable error in my carelessness, I now lost no time in putting up my small silk tent while I could still drag myself about. It was well I did so. For ten days thereafter, I was not able to rest a pound of weight upon my injured foot.

With the music and refreshing coolness

of the waterfall less than a hundred feet from my tent door, and the creek itself not more than a quarter of that distance, I was most fortunately situated under the circumstances. The first morning after my fall found me almost helpless. Every move I made gave me excruciating pain. My entire foot and ankle, and my leg half-way to the knee, were swollen to twice their normal size. This first day, I dragged myself to a sapling, cut it as I lay on my side, and made me a rough crutch of it. The second day, my entire limb was swollen until it had lost all semblance to form, and was so badly discolored that a cold and terrible dread began to grow in me. I had only thirty cartridges. I fired ten that first day, in the futile hope that some wandering adventurer might have drifted within the sound of my rifle. Occasionally, I hallooed. Night of the second day found me in the beginning of a fever, and, at a cost of physical agony, I prepared myself for the worst—placed my possessions within reach, and dragged myself up from the creek with a pail of water.

I shall never forget the dawn of the third day. Racked with pain, with the fever in my blood, my leg now stiff as a board to the thigh, I was still not blind to the beauty of it. It was a morning to put cheer and hope into the heart of a dying man. Then my eyes turned, and, a few feet away, I saw something looking at me.

Yes; to me, in that moment, it was a thing living and vibrant with life, and yet it was nothing more than a flower. It grew on a stem a foot high, and the face of it made me think of one of our home-garden pansies; only, the flower was all one color, with longer petals—a soft, velvety blue. It seemed to have turned to face the morning sun, and, in facing the sun, it was squarely facing me—a piquant, joyous, laughing little face, asking me as clearly as in words, "What can possibly be the matter with you on this fine morning?"

I am not going into the psychology or soul-language of that flower. I am not going to argue about it at all, but simply tell what it did for me. Perhaps, if you want to lay it all to something, you may say it was because I was out of my head a part of the time with fever. But that flower was my doctor through the days of torture and hopelessness that followed. It faced the sun in the morning, wide-awake and open. Late in the afternoon, it would turn a little on its stem, and with the setting of the sun, its soft petals would begin to close, and it would go to sleep, like a little child, with the coming of dusk. Day after day, it grew nearer and more of a beloved comrade.

After the fourth day, it did not, for an instant, allow me to think that I was going to die. Never for an instant did it lose its cheer and confidence. I do not think I realized how precious it had become to me until, one day, there came a terrific thunder-storm. I thought the first blast of the wind and beat of rain were going to destroy my comrade, and, almost in panic, I dragged myself right and left, forgetful of pain, until I had built a protection about my flower.

That was the sixth day, and, from that day, the swelling and the pain began to leave my limb. On the tenth, I could move about a little on my feet. On the fifteenth, I was prepared to undertake my journey again. I felt a real grief in leaving

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Diameter of shade, 16 inches



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printed on the box, certifying it does not contain white lead, rice powder or any harmful substance. This guaranteed pure powder is called La-may (French, Poudre L'Amé). Because it is pure and harmless, La-may is now used by over a million American women; it is now the most popular complexion powder sold in New York. Women who have used even the most expensive face powders say La-may stays on better than any other; they say they cannot buy a better powder than La-may anywhere at any price. There is also a La-may Talcum that prevents the souring of perspiration.

that solitary flower. It had become a part of me, had encouraged me in my blackest hours, had cheered and comforted me even in the darkness of nights, because I knew it was there—my little comrade—waiting for the sun. For me, it had individualized itself from among all the other flowers in the forest. And now, when I was about to go, I saw that the flower itself had about lived the span of its life; in a very short time it would fade and die. On the morning I left, the petals were drooping, and the tiny face did not look up at the sun and at me as brightly as before, and I fancied that I could hear its little voice saying, "Please take me with you." And I did. Call it foolish and trivial sentiment if you will, but the flower and I went together, and afterward I wrote a novel and called it "Flower of the North."

I have often heard strong men say: "Oh, that is merely a matter of sentiment. Life is too hard and real for a thing like that."

I agree with them to an extent. Sentiment does not play a large part in the world to-day. For sentiment, as that word is understood by the millions, is the heart and soul of all that is good and great. Without sentiment in the hearts of a man and a woman, there cannot be the fulness of real love between them, even though the law has made them man and wife. Without sentiment, no good act is ever done from the heart out. Without sentiment—a sentiment that warms the soul as a fire warms a cold room—there will never be a deep and comforting faith. I have seen this "cooperation of rational power and moral feeling" make plain faces beautiful, and I have seen the lack of it make others hard as rock. Selfishness, egoism, the desire to get everything possible out of life, no matter at what expense to others, is its antithesis.

As I write these last pages, I have at my hand facts which seem to show that sentiment, and therefore faith, is as nearly dead as it has ever been. For science in all the great nations of the earth is planning and plotting frantically for the extermination of their fellow men, and this, in the hour when all the world is crying out for a faith, is what is being achieved:

Deadly gases that will make gunpowder and the rifles anachronisms, that in the next war will depopulate whole regions—men, women, and little children alike.

Perfection of the lethal ray, which will shrivel up and paralyze human beings over vast areas, irrespective of whether they are combatants or not.

Development of plans for "germ-warfare," whereby whole nations will be infected by plagues.

And then consider the words of one great military scientist of the English-speaking race: "Germ-warfare was tried on a small scale in the late war, and its results have been promising. The method of its use was in the poisoning of water-supplies with cholera and typhus germs and the loosing of dogs inoculated with rabies and of women inoculated with syphilis into the enemy country. Here, apparently, is a promising beginning from which vast developments are to be hoped for."

A promising beginning—vast developments expected for the future—typhus—rabies—the commercial breeding of diseased women!

Yes; I great fail moral fr egoism an has com commits crimes, i wickedne aloud fo Power.

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Yes; the world is crying aloud for a great faith, even as it smashes itself into moral fragments on the rocks of its own egoism and its own selfishness. But there has come a rent in its armor, and as it commits crimes and plans for still greater crimes, it also begins to realize its colossal wickedness. And, in its terror, it shrieks aloud for a manifestation of the Divine Power. It demands proof.

And again I say that the proof is so near that the world looks over its head—and does not see. Not until man's egoism crumbles will he understand. For ghosts will not come back from the dead to quiet his frenzies, nor will angels descend from out of the heavens. The Divine Power is too great and all-encompassing for that. God, speaking of that Power as God, is not a trickster. He is not a mountebank. He is not a lawyer arguing his case. He is Life. And this Life That Never Dies has no favorites. Such is my humble faith.

A long time has passed since I wrote these pages. All day the countryside has lain in that sleepy, golden shimmer that is the pulse of Indian summer. The nights are touched with frost. There is glory in the warmth of the sun.

I am in a little valley that I love—Sleepy Hollow, I call it. The farmhouse is old and unpainted, and it has stood on its stone foundation for almost a century. The barn is sagging in the middle, and between the barn and the house is an old well that a long-dead grandfather dug when the timber in the hollow knew the howl of wolves and the screech of bobcats. Crowding close up to the back of the old house is an orchard of apple and cherry trees, so old they could tell many an interesting story if they could talk.

And all about the sides and the front of the house are great trees—a huge cottonwood, and ancient oaks from which the Indians may have shot squirrels with their bows and arrows two hundred years ago.

In this little old house of Sleepy Hollow there is a woman who has been in an invalid-chair for years, and who will never walk again; and there is a little man with a great, fierce mustache who watches her tenderly, and who knows that he must go on watching her until the end of her time—and yet in this house there is happiness, and also a great faith. And nature seems to rejoice in that faith. Birds build their nests under the porches. There is melody in the trees. At night, crickets sing in the long grass under the open windows, and the whippoorwills come and perch on the roof under an old sycamore.

Here are suffering—and peace; few of the riches of man, but an unlimited wealth of contentment and faith. These two, prisoned to the end of their days, have found what all the world is seeking. The little old house of the hollow, even with its tragedy, is glad. And life has made it so, the understanding of life, the voice and living presence of life as it whispers about me now in the golden sheen of Indian summer.

And its whisper seems to be: "Men are seeking me, reaching out for me, crying for me—yet they do not find me. They are looking far, and I am very near—so far that they look over and beyond me when I am waiting at their feet. When, at last, they see me, and understand, then will they have discovered the greatest of all treasures—Faith!"



Give Him a "Hickok" Belt with Initial or Monogram Buckle this Christmas

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Grand Larceny

(Continued from page 42)

that one is looked on as an object of exchange, as much as any dog or horse."

"You aren't!" he declared hotly. "Oh, I—"

"I am," she insisted, calm as ever. "I'm not only a chattel, but just a silly, irresponsible shuttle, too—a shuttle flying back and forth, without any volition of my own, in the Loom of Men. I'm all that—and more. And I—I never even knew it. I was content to be—till—"

She finished the sentence with a glance at the letter she still held. Barry's lips parted; then he hesitated, at a loss how to meet this utterly strange mood of his volatile wife. And she went on:

"I'm all that. At least, I was till I read this thing. But, somehow, as I stood there, trying to think and to shake off the numbness of the shock, all at once I began to grow up. Just as I've read that a frightful shock will sometimes start a stunted child to growing—if it doesn't kill him. And I saw what I was. And what I am going to be. I was a fluffy bit of amusing worthlessness, Barry. I—"

"No! You are—"

"I was! But I'm not now. And I'll never be again. It isn't that I've done any changing on my own account. But something bigger than I has changed me, at the same time it opened my eyes. It showed me what I was, and then what I'll have to be. Barry, it isn't right—it isn't nature—for a woman to be a spineless chattel. Other and better and wiser women found that out long ago. And, this past few decades, they've been learning to stand, four-square, on their own feet. To be people, not puppets! And now, at last, I've learned it, too. And, oh, it's bitter learning, Barry!"

"Kathleen!" he cried, stung by the pain in her voice.

But at once she was her new self again, the self he did not know, the self he had never known. Vague memories of Ibsen's "Doll's House" flitting through her oddly vibrant brain, she continued:

"It's humiliating to be tossed back and forth between two men—with both of them trying to get rid of me, and neither of them stopping to wonder if I have any preference in the matter. But it can't happen again—to me. It couldn't have happened at all, if I was a real woman. 'Such women as God made,' you call them in this letter. I've got to start all over again—square and independent. I've got to learn to walk on my own feet and in my own path. Until a woman learns to do that, she has no right to walk in any other path. I know that now. I'm going to make a fresh start—perhaps along a good path, perhaps along a bad path. But, at any rate, it will be a path I shall blaze for myself."

"It's my place to—" began Barry yearningly.

But again the muted level tones broke in on his fervor.

"You didn't want me any longer," said Kathleen. "John wouldn't take me back. That doesn't sting or hurt me—now. Because, even if both of you longed for me, neither of you could have me. Before I belong to anybody again—if ever I do—I must first learn to belong to myself."

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If you do not know of an Iron Clad dealer nearby, send us 75c (if you live east of the Rockies) for each pair wanted, stating size (sizes 9½ to 11½). If you prefer black, order No. 335, same price. We will forward to your address, postage prepaid.

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Like Nora Helmer, I must belong to myself—to be *sure* of myself. To be so sure of myself that no man will ever again have the right to doubt me, or to look on me as an item of exchange.

"I—I think I'm sane, Barry, for the first time in all my chiffon-and-spangles life. I may be ungrateful. I think I am. I may be reckless in this thing I am going to do. The path may lead more downhill than to the heights. But, anyway, it will be my own path. I shall have blazed it myself, and I'll tread it myself, wherever it happens to lead me. Perhaps it may lead me back, some day, to you. Perhaps to John Anixter. Perhaps to some other man. But whomever it leads me to, I'll be walking firmly and open-eyed to him—not dancing blindly. And my journey, then, will be *sure*. Not a flyaway adventure.

"John treated me like a child. You treated me like a—a mistress. Neither of you was great enough (or else I was too blind) to make a woman of me. It took the combined literary efforts of both of you, in this charming letter, to do it. But it's *done*. The way is clear—very, terribly clear, Barry. I'm sorry. But it is good-by."

"Kathleen!" he cried, unbelieving. But she slipped from between the half-sobbing man's outstretched arms and out of the room. He started to follow. But, on reflection, he turned back toward the gray, dead fire.

"She's overwrought and unstrung, poor baby!" he muttered remorsefully. "I'll let her sleep on it. In the morning, we'll both be cooler, and we can start all over again. What a wild ass of the desert I was to show her that rotten letter! She—"

The very soft closing of the front door broke in on his mumbled reverie. He stood stock-still for perhaps a minute, the significance of the sound failing to register on his bewildered senses. Then, with a terrified cry of "Kathleen!" he rushed from the room and down the hall to the door.

Flinging it wide, he peered frantically up and down the deserted midnight street.

Athwart the threshold, under one of his trembling feet, lay a scrap of white. Dully, he stooped and picked it up. At the action, an elusively faint breath of perfume mounted to his brain.

In his palm nestled a warm fragment of filmy lace and cambric, hardly larger than his own hand.

The tiny handkerchief called to him, more loudly than trumpet-blast, of the woman its dainty and fragrant exquisiteness typified.

But it had been left behind, discarded—forgotten—when its whilom owner fared forth to face a new world.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS—The publication-date of *Cosmopolitan* will be henceforth the last week-day of the month preceding that which is printed on the magazine. For example: December 31st, for January issue; January 31st, for February issue. It may be, however, that delays in transportation may occasionally prevent your copy from reaching you on time. In which case, please do not write us immediately, for the magazine will probably arrive within a few days.

Are You a Coward?

(Continued from page 71)

for the fight, but the plain and homely grape-sugar, or glucose, into which our bodies convert all the starch and sugar that we eat. The reproach "white-livered," in the sense of a liver empty of blood and drained clear of sugar, was by no means a mere figure of speech.

Upon the blood itself, the adrenalin works an even more extraordinary change—that is, by markedly shortening the time required for its clotting. Instead of taking five to seven minutes to clot firmly, it can now accomplish that life-saving feat in one or one and a half minutes. As this clotting of the blood is nature's means of closing a wounded artery and stopping loss of blood or even life from hemorrhage, it may easily be seen what a foresighted change this is.

This extraordinary little extract, which is the real "blood-regulator" of the body, not the advertised kind, next relaxes the muscles which constrict and narrow the air-tubes in the lungs, so as to allow the largest possible amount of air to pour through them and supply oxygen for the great fighting-muscles of the body. Incidentally, this power of relaxing bronchial spasm in the lungs makes adrenalin injected under the skin one of our promptest and most invaluable remedies for the relief of the agonizing spasms of asthma.

Last but not least, this extract from the fight-fear gland has the power of washing out or neutralizing the fatigue-poisons which pile up or accumulate in the muscles under the strain of violent effort. This greatly delays or abolishes the sense of fatigue, making the muscles almost tireless even under the tremendous and prolonged strains of either fight or flight. This it is that, in part, accounts for the long-familiar fact that men, either in the fury of fighting or the panic of headlong flight, are almost insensible to fatigue or even to pain, apparently possessed of super-human strength and capable of astounding feats of endurance.

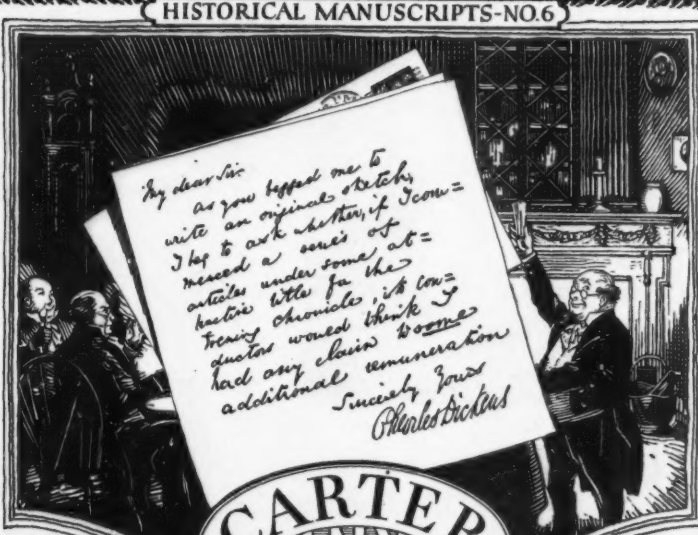
One is almost tempted to believe that the real or chief seat of emotion in the body is neither the heart, as we moderns romantically imagine, nor the liver, as the ancients perhaps more accurately held, but the little insignificant-looking adrenal gland perched up on top of the kidney.

These findings lead to the interesting and important practical conclusion, which the prophetic genius of Darwin glimpsed half a century ago, that the bodily signs of fear and of fighting-courage are, in surprisingly large measure, not merely alike but one and the same. So that no one need consider himself disgraced by feeling them. The trembling of the muscles is a sort of preliminary cranking-up, due to their flushing with abundant supply of sugar-rich blood. Paleness of the face, which marks both fear and intense rage, is the squeezing-out of the blood from the surface blood-vessels of the skin into the great muscles and the heart.

"Standing on end" of the hair is an ancient ancestral inheritance, an attempt to make ourselves look as big and ferocious as possible.

Even the feeling of sinking or of "gone-ness" in the pit of the stomach is due to the squeezing-out of the blood from the

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS-NO.6



*My dear Sir
as you begged me to
write an original sketch,
I beg to ask whether, if I can =
messaged a series of
articles under some ab =
tractive title for the
Famous Chronicle, it would
be worth your while to think I
had any claim to some
additional remuneration
Sincerely Yours
Charles Dickens*

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Excerpt from
letter to
George Hogarth
from Charles Dickens

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abdomen, which will take no part in the coming fight, into the heart and muscles which will.

The familiar cold perspiration is a desperate attempt by the blood-vessels of the skin to help purify the blood of its fatigues-poisons.

More paradoxical yet, as fear is the instinct of self-preservation and the oldest and most frequent of our emotions, it frequently gets the first start. So that, apparently, a great many of even the bravest of men have to be frightened first before their bodies can be prepared to exert to the utmost all their powers in fighting.

This contradiction has its almost humorous side. The famous grand marshal of France, Turenne, used to turn pale and shake like a leaf on the morning of a battle.

One of the bravest of the young ambulance-drivers on the Western front, a mere boy, under military age, who risked his life a dozen times a day when a battle was on to bring in his wounded, told me he shivered every time he drove into the zone of shell-fire. But he just pulled forward the leather hood of his car so as to cover his head, and then felt quite comfortable and drove on as if he were only going into a shower of rain or a snow-storm.

And a high officer of the Italian staff assured me that he felt much safer and more easy in his mind dashing along shell-swept roads from one advance-headquarters to another if he could have a limousine instead of an open car.

Is it in any way possible that lack of courage may be due to lack of vigor and secreting power in the adrenal gland? At one time, there were not lacking enthusiasts, eagerly seeking to find a physical and material basis for everything, who were almost ready to champion this idea. Indeed, it was strongly suggested, some twenty years ago by the distinguished Italian physiologist, Mosso, before the remarkable powers of the adrenals were so fully understood, that fear was produced, or, at least, greatly aggravated, by the oversecretion of an antagonistic gland, the thyroid. This is the gland lying on each side of the windpipe, in the lower part of the front of the neck, whose enlargement forms the well-known disease, goiter.

Overaction or diseased action of this thyroid gland, such as occurs in certain soft forms of goiter, does produce many of the bodily signs and a curious mimicry of fear—paleness of the skin, protruding and glaring eyeballs, cold perspiration, furiously rapid pulse, and quickened breathing. And those who suffer from this form of goiter are usually anxious, apprehensive, and nervous to a high degree.

And, curiously enough, in this war there was quite a considerable amount of overaction of the thyroid, usually with slight enlargement of the gland, known as hyperthyroidism, among those recruits who developed war-neurosis, or "shell-shock in advance," as it was called, before they reached the trenches, or even had left the shores of this continent. In some rare and extreme cases, this led even to attempts at suicide by leaping overboard from the transports or self-shooting in the training-camps. But the connection was slight, and the relation perhaps only apparent, for the reason that victims and sufferers from shell-shock on the whole

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showed little more thyroid enlargement than the average man. Secondly, because the large majority of all cases of shell-shock are in no sense cowardly but have been so utterly shaken out of their normal senses and bearings, by the terrific and paralyzing strains and shocks to which they have been submitted, that they lose control of their steering-gear temporarily, so to speak.

How utter this lack of control may be, how completely they are reduced to mere'y automatons or machines, which respond instantly and only when a certain button is pressed, so to speak, may be illustrated by a case which I saw in one of the great hospitals a score or two of miles behind the front. A young soldier lay upon his cot in a state of complete unconsciousness. Shoutings, flashing of bright lights into his eyes, shakings, even electric shocks of considerable severity produced no response whatsoever; he lay like one dead, except for his breathing. The doctor in charge gave me a rapid outline of his history and the utter failure of all attempts to wake him until they happened to stumble upon one "word of power."

"Now," he said, "just watch." He stepped forward, took the sleeper by his shoulder, and shook him vigorously, shouted his name in his ear, flashed an electric torch in his eyes, but with no response whatever. Then, in little more than a loud conversational tone, he called: "The bombs, Johnny! Where are the bombs?" Slowly the sleeper lifted his head from his pillow, rolled over the edge of his bed, and plunged underneath the cot, feeling about with his hands until one of them fell upon an old leather pipe-case which had been left there. Instantly he clutched this, rose to his knees beside the bed, hurled it in the direction of the nearest window, got back into bed, and relapsed back into unconscious slumber as before. A screen had been placed over the window, because the first time that he had responded to the key-word "bomb" in this manner, an electric torch had been rolled within reach of his hand to see what he would do with it, and he had hurled it crashing through the glass.

He had been picked up unconscious among the bodies of his comrades, the only survivor of five in the bay of a trench, and probably his last memory was that of bravely moving toward and reaching for the bomb, which had fallen, to try to throw it out of the trench before it would explode. So cowardice had nothing whatever to do with his shell-shock. He ultimately woke up from his coma-sleep, made a good recovery, and went back to duty.

The idea of the adrenal as a fight-gland and the thyroid as a fear-gland may perhaps be justifiable to the extent of helping to explain and emphasize how much harder it is for some men to be brave than for others. By the mercy of heaven, in the judgment of experienced leaders of men, something like ninety per cent. of all normal, healthy men will prove brave and resolute when the great soul-shaking battle-test comes, turning the preliminary twitchings and "getting up on their toes" of their muscles into fierce advance upon the enemy instead of panic-retreat. Yet it should make us more merciful in our judgment of the poor coward to remember

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How to banish the needless flaws that ruin your appearance

It is so easy to let your skin acquire bad traits

WIND and cold, you know, are ruinous to the texture of your skin. They whip the moisture out of it—leave it dry and tense. Then follow roughening and chapping.

Skin specialists say that one can protect the skin by applying a softening and soothing cream always before venturing out. Never omit this. One little slip, and your skin has had its first dangerous lesson on how to grow rough!

Of course you need for this protection a cream which will not make your

will not chap all winter long. Regardless of the weather it will become more and more exquisite in texture.

Does the powder keep coming off your face, leaving you all shiny and embarrassed?

Perhaps you are expecting too much of it. Really, it is entirely your own fault if you put the powder directly on the skin and expect it to stay on of its own accord. The finest of powders needs a base to hold it, and to keep it smooth.

For this use, as for protection from the weather, you need a cream without oil. Before you powder, take a bit of Pond's Vanishing Cream and rub it lightly into the skin. At once it disappears, leaving your skin softened. Now powder as usual and don't think of it again. The powder will stay on two or three times as long as ever before.

When your face is tense from a long, hard day, yet you want to "look beautiful," remember that the cool, fragrant touch of Pond's Vanishing Cream smoothed over the face and neck will instantly bring it new freshness. Do this before you go to a dance. All the tell-tale weariness around eyes and mouth will vanish. Your skin will gain a new transparency. You need never let it get into the way of *staying* tired.



To make the powder stay on all evening apply a powder base of Pond's Vanishing Cream

face look oily before going out. Pond's Vanishing Cream is made without any oil precisely for this daytime and evening use. It cannot reappear in a shine. Lightly touch your face with Pond's Vanishing Cream. This leaves your face smooth and protects it from the weather. Do this every time you go out and your skin



One little bedtime duty you must not forget if you care about a clear complexion is the cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream



Whenever you want to look especially lovely, even though you are tired, you can give your complexion new freshness at a moment's notice. Pond's Vanishing Cream is famous for the eleventh hour freshening it brings your skin

Beware of allowing your skin to cloud up and lose its clearness. When this happens, it is because minute particles of dust have worked their way too deep into the pores to be removed by ordinary bathing. Really, it means that you have been allowing your skin to go only half cleansed! To remove this deeply lodged dust you need an entirely different cream, a cream *with* an oil base. Pond's Cold Cream has just the amount of oil to work deep into the pores and cleanse them.

Before you go to bed and whenever you have been especially exposed to dust, rub Pond's Cold Cream into the pores of the skin. Then wipe it off with a soft cloth. You will say, "How could so much dust have gotten into my pores!" Do this regularly and you will be rewarded by a clear, fresh skin.

Every normal skin needs both these creams. Neither will foster the growth of hair.

Get a jar or tube of each today at any drug or department store. You will realize for the first time how lovely your skin can be.

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By James Oliver Curwood
who wrote "The River's End"

"It is my ambition to take my readers with me into this heart of Nature," once said Mr. Curwood. And this he does because before he wrote "The Valley of Silent Men," he himself travelled down those fabled streams flowing north with the wild "riverbrigades" of God's Country.

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The Valley of Silent Men

the possibility of the failure of the adrenal to pour its strengthening elixirs into the blood in proper amounts or proportions. Or that his whole system may be perpetually flooded by the depressing and disheartening flow of secretion from an enlarged or diseased thyroid.

It is impossible to say positively what proportion of men who have failed in the supreme test have defective adrenals, because we have no adequate tests as yet to determine whether these glands are playing their part properly or not. For some curious reason, the only disease which we can positively trace to a failure of the adrenals is a rare and rather strange condition known as "Addison's disease." This is a steady and progressive weakness and wasting, first of the muscles and then of the heart, with anemia and decline of all the vital powers extending usually over several years and ending ultimately in death. Its one striking and distinguishing feature is a singular bronzing of the skin, first of the forehead, and later extending widely over other regions of the body, which gives it its other name, the "bronzed-skin disease."

After death the adrenal glands are found wasted away, in some cases by a tubercular process, and this bronze discoloration of the skin may be due to the breaking-down of the blood and deposit of its coloring-matter or to the coloring matter of the substance of the adrenal, which is of a deep-yellow tint.

One thing, however, is very clear, and that is that one of the surprises of this war was the considerable and unexpected part played by mild degrees of mental defect in the rejections by our draft-boards. A very ingenious set of psychologic tests for practical intelligence and actual mental vigor were devised by the army commission of experts in psychology, with the result that mental defects rose to something like a fourth or fifth in importance in the list of causes for rejection.

In the beginning, it was planned to exclude, at least from active service abroad, all those who fell below the intelligence of a child of twelve, but this was found to exclude such a large amount of otherwise good fighting-material that the standard could not be maintained.

Many, indeed the great majority of those who went into the army with known degrees of mild mental defect, made excellent soldiers, with a blunt, unconscious, and unworring courage, supported by confidence in their leaders and loyalty to their comrades. But, in the opinion of thoughtful army-medical observers of wide experience, the proportion of those who broke down or lost control at the supreme moment, whether in the form of shell-shock or of simple failure to obey orders, was much higher among these children who had never grown up than it was among normal soldiers of full mental power.

One of the most distinguished English army experts in mental diseases even put the percentage of nervous instability, or mental defect, or bad nervous family history, among the shell-shocked at over sixty per cent. If we could exclude from an army the approximately one-half of one per cent. of the insane and perhaps one per cent. more with bad family history, together with the three or four per cent. of the mildly mentally defective, or feeble-minded, there is no doubt that

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we should markedly diminish the number of instances of cowardice, in the sense of failure to obey orders from fear.

But there is another consideration which may justly modify the severity of our judgment upon the man who shows the white feather at a pinch. It is that, although the adrenal may have loyally played its Paul Revere part in summoning up all the forces of the body to repel the enemy, these may fail to respond because the reserves have been exhausted. The man whose liver has been drained empty of sugar by prolonged illness or semistarvation, or whose heart is flabby and weak after severe illness, or whose blood is filled with the toxins of disease, will unquestionably find it much harder to rally himself and rise above his fears at the critical moment than if he were healthy and well fed and in the pink of physical condition. Great leaders have always recognized this fact.

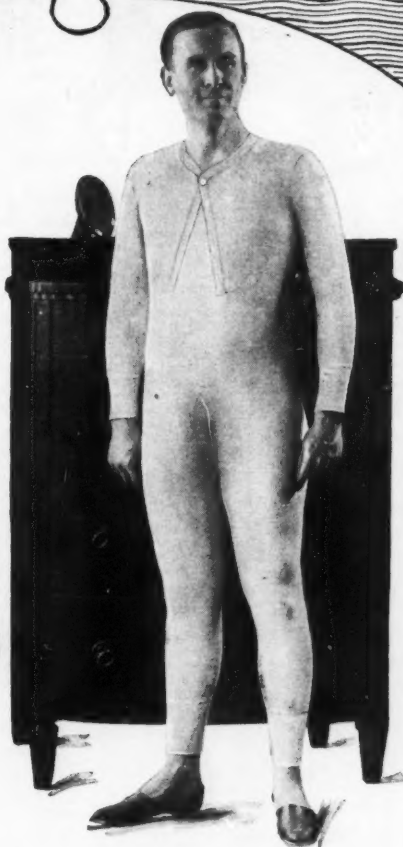
Officers of repeated decorations who have been desperately wounded, recovered, and then gone back to the front, have frankly told me that it was much harder for them or any of their men to maintain that firm indifference to danger, that readiness to dash forward instantly at the word of command, which is so absolutely necessary in the incessant stress and thunder of modern bombardments, than it had been before they were wounded—especially if their wounds had involved some of the great nerve-trunks of the spinal cord or the brain.

It was such considerations and the splendidly high average of actual bravery that led one of our most careful and competent students of human behavior and the human mind, Professor Ernest Hocking, after he had been given unusual facilities for studying the conduct of the Allied forces along the Western front, to make the extraordinary statement that it seemed to him "very uncertain whether the noun 'coward' has any application in this war." And that certainly no man should be judged a coward solely on his behavior in any one single instance.

Don't shoot the first-time coward or even temporary deserter. Give him another chance, and he will "come back" nine times out of ten. The danger of cowardice proving infectious and starting a panic of fear to run through the ranks must be borne in mind. It was a very real risk in the past and justified some of the sternest military measures, but in armies of to-day, with their steadiness and high average of intelligence, it is probably comparatively slight.

Obedience to discipline, fidelity to comrades, loyalty to the group, to the state, and harking back before that to the herd or to the pack, will carry the vast majority of men bravely past these inward quakings and turn their momentary fears into fury and courage. The ability to face danger steadily when it comes is just as necessary in peace as in war, though the call is not so frequent or so soul-racking. Most men, indeed, learn to enjoy exposing themselves to danger, and even take pleasure in the momentary shiver of fear, because they know it will be promptly followed by the glorious and lasting reaction of courage and conquest. All honor to the conquering hero, but judge mercifully the poor unfortunate whose fears may have swept him from his balance for the moment.

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The Profiteers

(Continued from page 20)

couple of million pounds' worth of business in my hand and not set it going. I'll be back directly."

"Don't hurry on my account," Wingate replied. "I'm going to use your telephone, if I may."

"Of course! You have a private line there. The others will be all buzzing away in a minute. What about lunch?"

"To-morrow, one o'clock, at the Milan," Wingate appointed. "I'm busy to-day."

V

WINGATE made his way from the City to Shaftesbury Avenue, where he entered a block of offices, studied the direction-board on the wall for a few minutes, and finally took the lift to the fourth floor. Exactly opposite to him, across the uncarpeted corridor, was a door from which half the varnish had peeled off, on which was painted, in white letters:

MR. ANDREW SLATE

A knock on the panel resulted in an immediate invitation to enter. Wingate turned the handle, entered, and closed the door behind him. The man who was the solitary occupant of the room half rose from behind his desk.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

Wingate was in no hurry to reply. He took rapid stock of his surroundings and of the man who confronted him. The room was small, none too clean, and badly furnished. It reeked with the smell of tobacco, and, notwithstanding the warmth of the June day, all the windows were tightly closed. Its occupant, a lank man with a smooth but wizened face, straight white hair, and dark, piercing eyes, was in accord with his surroundings, shabby, unkempt.

"Hm," Wingate remarked. "Seems to me you're not taking care of yourself. Andrew. Do you mind if I open a window or two?"

"My God, it's Wingate!" the tenant of the room exclaimed.

Wingate, who had succeeded in opening the windows, came over and shook hands with the man.

"How are you, Andrew?" he said. "What on earth's got you that you choose to live in an atmosphere like this?"

Slate, who had recovered from his surprise, slipped dejectedly back into his place. Wingate had established himself upon the only remaining chair.

"I've had lung-trouble over here," Slate explained. "This heavy atmosphere plays the devil with one's breathing. I guess you're right about the windows, though. How did you find me out?"

"Telephone directory, aided by my natural intelligence," Wingate replied. "What are you doing?"

"Trying to run straight, and finding it filthy difficult," the other answered.

"What do you call yourself, anyway?" Wingate asked. "There's nothing except your name on the board down-stairs."

Slate nodded.

"I'm the only one in the building," he said, "who isn't either a theatrical agent or a bookmaker. I've got just a small connection among the riffraff as a man

Cosmopolitan for December, 1920



Infection

would have been prevented if Absorbine, Jr. had been applied when this "little accident" happened.

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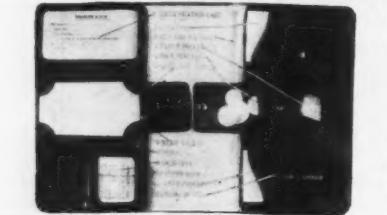
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who can be trusted to collect the necessary evidence in a divorce case, especially if there's a little collusion, or find a few false witnesses to help a thief with an alibi. Once or twice, I have even gone so far as to introduce a receiver to a thief."

"Hm," Wingate observed. "You see all sorts of life."

"I do, indeed," Slate admitted. "What do you want with me?"

Wingate looked thoughtfully at the man whom he had come to visit. Then he leaned across and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Andrew," he said, "you and I have looked out at life once or twice and seen the big things. I guess there's no false shame between us. I can say what I want, can't I?"

"I should say so," was the hearty reply. "Get right on with it, John."

"It's like this," Wingate explained: "I've got a job for you. You can't do it like that. Walk to the door, will you?"

"I know you're going to look at my boots," Slate declared, as he rose unwillingly and obeyed.

"You've got it in one," Wingate acquiesced. "You're a smart fellow still, Slate, I see. Now, listen: You can't do my job like that. Here's twenty pounds on account. I'm going to stroll round to the Milan grill-room. I shall expect you there in half an hour for luncheon."

Slate took the money and reached for his hat.

"Come along, then. You take the lift down. I'll go by the stairs. I sha'n't be late, unless you'd like me to stop and have a shave and my hair trimmed."

"Great idea!" Wingate assented. "I'll make it three-quarters."

The metamorphosis in Andrew Slate was complete. With his closely trimmed white hair, the dark growth gone from his chin, in a well-cut morning coat and trousers, a gray tie and fashionable collar, his appearance was entirely irreproachable. Wingate nodded his satisfaction as he came up to the table.

"Jolly well done! Andrew," he declared. "Now, drink that cocktail up, and we'll talk business."

Andrew Slate's altered deportment would have delighted the author of "Sartor Resartus." With his modish and correct clothes, his self-respect seemed to have returned. He studied the menu which Wingate passed him through a well-polished eye-glass, and one could well have believed that he was a distinguished and frequent patron of the place.

"Well, what is it, Wingate?" he asked, at last, when the business of ordering luncheon was concluded. "I only hope it's something I can tackle."

"You can tackle it all right," his companion assured him encouragingly. "For a week or ten days, you've nothing more to do than a little ordinary detective business. If I decide to carry out a scheme which is forming in my mind, it will be a more serious affair. Time enough for that, though. I should just like to ask you this: Can you find a few bullies of the Tom Brogan class, if necessary?"

"Half a hundred, if you want them," Slate replied confidently. "There's nothing I could get done in New York or Chicago which I can't get done here, and at a great deal less cost and trouble. I could

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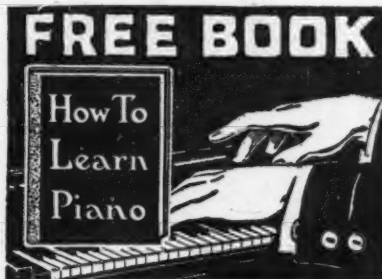
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Wingate nodded.

"We aren't going quite so far as that," he said. "Have you anything on at all at the present moment?"

"Not a thing."

"I want you altogether free," Wingate went on. "I'm talking business now, because it's necessary. You're going to earn money with me, Andrew, and, incidentally, you are going to help me break the man whom I think that you hate almost as much as I do."

"You don't mean Phipps—Dreadnought Phipps?" Slate exclaimed.

"I do," Wingate answered. "We are up against one another once more, and, believe me, Slate, this is going to be the last time."

There was a smoldering fire in Slate's fine eyes. Yet he seemed disturbed.

"You're up against a big thing, Wingate," he said. "They say Phipps is coining money in this new company of his."

"I'm after his blood, all the same," Wingate replied. "We've had several tussles since—" Wingate hesitated.

"Since you nearly beat the breath out of his body?" Slate interrupted.

"Yes; we've had several tussles since then," Wingate repeated, "and we haven't hurt one another much. This time, I think, one of us is going under. Phipps wants to join issue with me in the City. I'm out to break him properly this time, and I am not going to rush in until I know the ropes."

Slate emptied a glass of wine.

"John," he said, relapsing once more into the familiarity of their early college-days, "you couldn't have set me a job more to my heart than to have me help in brewing mischief for Peter Phipps. I'm your man, body and soul—you know that. But you've been a good friend to me—almost the only one I ever had—and I've got to put this up to you: Peter Phipps is as clever as the devil. So I only want to say this: Go warily. Always remember that he has something up his sleeve."

Wingate nodded.

"That's all right, Slate," he said. "I promise you I'll think out every move on the board. I shall risk nothing until I can see my way clear ahead. Meanwhile, you can work on this."

He wrote a few sentences on a sheet of paper, which he folded up and passed across the table.

"Don't open it now," he said. "Think it over, and don't mind putting suggestions up to me if anything occurs to you. Call here to see me every morning at ten o'clock. I have a suite in the Court, number eighty-nine. You're done with business—you understand?"

"Sure!" Slate answered. "Let's talk about that last game you and I were in against Princeton."

VI

JOSEPHINE received her altogether unexpected visitor that afternoon with a certain amount of trepidation, mingled with considerable distaste. Mr. Peter Phipps' manner, however, went far toward disarming resentment. He was suave, restrained, and exceedingly apologetic.

"If I have taken a liberty in coming to see you, Lady Dredinton, without a

direct invitation, I am going to apologize right away," he said. "I don't get much of an opportunity for a chat with you while the others are all around, and I felt, this afternoon, like taking my chance of finding you at home."

"I am always glad to see my husband's friends," Josephine replied, a little stiffly. "As a matter of fact, however, I was surprised to see you, because I left word that I was at home only to one caller."

"Fortunate person!" Mr. Phipps declared, with a sign. "May I sit down?"

"Certainly," was the somewhat cold assent. "If you really have anything to say to me, perhaps you had better let me know what it is at once."

Peter Phipps was a man whose life had been spent in facing and overcoming difficulties, but, as he took the chair to which Josephine had somewhat ungraciously pointed, he was compelled to admit to himself that he was confronted with a task which might well tax his astuteness to the utmost. To begin with, he made use of one of his favorite weapons—silence. He sat quite still, studying the situation, and, in those few moments, Josephine found herself studying him. He was tall, over six feet, with burly shoulders, a thick-set body, and legs rather short for his height. He was clean-shaven; his hair was a sandy gray, his complexion florid, his eyes blue and piercing. He was dressed with care, almost with distinction. But for his pronounced American accent, he would probably have been taken for a Scandinavian.

"Did you come here to improve your acquaintance with the interior of my sitting-room?" Josephine asked, a little irritated at last by his silence.

"I should say not! I came, Lady Dredlington, to talk to you about your husband."

"Then, if you will allow me to say so," Josephine replied, "you have come upon a very purposeless errand."

Peter Phipps leaned forward in his chair. "See here, Lady Dredlington," he began: "You don't like me. That's my misfortune, but it doesn't affect the matter as it stands at present between us. I have a kindly feeling for your husband, and I have—a feeling for you which I won't, at present, presume to refer to."

"Perhaps," Josephine said calmly, "you had better not."

"That feeling," Phipps went on, "has brought me here this afternoon. Your husband is not playing the game with us any more than he is with you."

"What do you know?"

"Let's cut that out, shall we? Let's talk like a sensible man and woman. Do you want us to drop your husband out of the B. & I. Board?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," Josephine assured him. "I cannot imagine why you ever put him on."

Peter Phipps was a little staggered.

"Perhaps you don't know," he said, "that your husband's salary for doing nothing is four thousand pounds a year."

"I suppose you think him worth that," Josephine answered coldly, "or you would not pay it."

"He is worth nothing at all," Phipps declared bluntly. "I put him on the board and I am paying him four thousand a year for a reason at which I am surprised you have never guessed."



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"How on earth should I?" Josephine demanded. "On the face of it, I should say you were mad."

"We will leave the reason for Lord Dredlington's appointment alone for the moment," Phipps continued. "I imagined that it would be gratifying to you. I imagined that the four thousand a year would be of some account in your house-keeping."

"You were entirely wrong, then," Josephine replied. "Whatever Lord Dredlington may draw from your company, he has kept. Not one penny of it has come to me, directly or indirectly."

Phipps was staggered.

"Say, this is the worst thing ever!" he declared. "Why, what do you suppose your husband does with the money?"

"I have no idea, nor have I any interest."

"Come, come," Phipps murmured; "that's bad. Of course," he went on, "I knew that Lord Dredlington had other interests in life besides his domestic ones, but I had no idea that he carried things to such a length."

Josephine glanced at the clock.

"Will you forgive my saying that, up to the present, you have not offered me any sufficient explanation of your visit?"

"I was coming to it," he assured her.

"To tell you the truth, you've rather cut the ground away from under my feet. I was coming to tell you that Lord Dredlington had drawn money from the company to which he was not entitled, besides having overdrawn his salary to a considerable extent. I came to you to know what I was to do."

"I cannot conceive a person less able to advise you," she answered. "I have said before that my husband's connection with your company is one which I dislike extremely, and I should be delighted to hear that it was ended."

"If it were ended at the present moment," Phipps said slowly, "it would, I fear, be under somewhat painful circumstances."

"What do you mean?"

"What I very much hate to put into plain words. Your husband has used money of the company's to which he has no right. I have been paying him four thousand a year, hoping that, indirectly, I was benefiting you. He has deceived me. I see no reason why I should spare him. The last money he drew from the company—his action in drawing it amounts to a criminal misdemeanor."

"Do you mean that you will prosecute him?"

"Why not?"

Josephine, for the first time, showed signs of disturbance.

"Is this what you came to tell me?"

"In a sense, yes."

"What is the amount?"

"The specific amount in question is a thousand pounds."

"And do you want me to find it to save my husband from prison?"





































Mr. Phipps was shocked.

"My dear lady," he protested, "you have entirely misunderstood me if you imagine for a moment that I came here to ask you to make up the amount of your husband's defalcations."

"What did you come for, then?"

"I came," Peter Phipps declared, "entirely out of consideration for you. I came to ask what you wished done, and to do it."

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I came to assure you of my sympathy, if you will accept it, my friendship, and, if you will further honor me by accepting it, my help."

"Just how do you propose to help me?" Josephine inquired.

"Just in the way," he answered, "that a man to whom money is of no account may sometimes help a woman for whom he has a most profound, a most sincere, a most respectful admiration."

"You came, in fact," Josephine said, "to place your bank-account at my disposal?"

"I would never have ventured," he protested, "to have put the matter so crudely. I came to express my admiration for you and my desire to help you."

"And in return?"

"I do not bargain, Lady Dredlington," Phipps said slowly. "I must confess that, if you could regard me with a little more toleration, if you would endeavor—may I say?—to adopt a more sympathetic attitude with regard to me, it would give me the deepest pleasure."

Josephine shook her head.

"Mr. Phipps," she said, "you have the name of being a very hard-headed and shrewd business man. You come here offering my husband's honor and your bank-account. I could not possibly accept these things from a person to whom I can make no return. If you will let me know the amount of my husband's defalcation, I will try to pay it."

"You cannot believe," he exclaimed, almost angrily, "that I came here to take your money?"

"Did you come here believing that I was going to take yours?" she asked.

Peter Phipps, who knew men through and through, and had also a profound acquaintance with women of a certain class, was face to face, for once, with a type of which he knew little. The woman who could refuse his millions, offered in such a manner, could have no real existence for him. Somewhere or other, he must have blundered, he told himself. Or, perhaps, she was clever—she was leading him on to more definite things.

"I came here, Lady Dredlington," he said, "prepared to offer, if you would accept it, everything I possess in the world in return for a little kindness."

Phipps had not heard the knock at the door, though he saw the change in Josephine's face. She rose to her feet with a transfiguring smile.

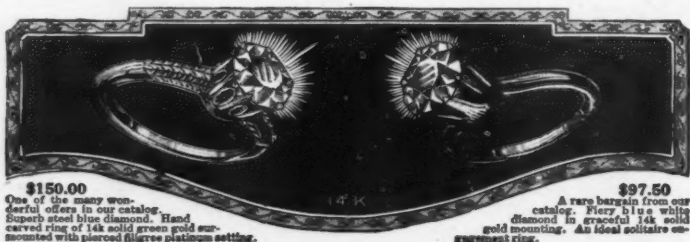
"How lucky I am," she exclaimed, "to have a witness to such a wonderful offer!"

VII

WINGATE paused for a moment in his passage across the room. His outstretched hand fell to his side. The expression of eagerness with which he had approached Josephine disappeared from his face. He confronted Phipps, who had also risen to his feet, as a right-living man should confront his enemy. There was a second or two of tense silence, broken by Phipps, who was the first to recover himself.

"Welcome to London, Mr. Wingate," he said. "I was hoping to see you this morning in the City. This is, perhaps, a more fortunate meeting."

"You two know each other?" Josephine murmured.



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"We are old acquaintances," Wingate replied.

"And business rivals," Phipps put in cheerfully. "A certain wholesome rivalry, Lady Dredlington, is good for us all."

Josephine, who had been standing up for the last few moments, touched the bell.

"You will keep your rivalry for the City, I trust," she said.

It was just then that Phipps surprised a little glance flashed from Josephine to Wingate. He seemed suddenly to increase in size, to become more menacing, portentous. There was thunder upon his forehead. At that moment, the butler opened the door and Josephine held out her hand.

"It was very kind of you to call, Mr. Phipps. I will think over all that you have said, and discuss it—with my husband."

Phipps had regained command of himself. He bowed low over her hand, but could not keep the malice from his tone.

"You could not have a better counselor," he declared.

Neither Josephine nor Wingate spoke a word until the door had finally closed upon the unwelcome caller. Then she sank back upon the couch and motioned him to sit by her side.

"I suppose I am an idiot," she acknowledged, "but that man terrifies me."

"In what way?"

"He is my husband's associate in business," Josephine said, "and apparently desires to take advantage of that fact. My husband is not a reliable person where money is concerned. He seems to have been behaving rather badly."

"I am very sorry," Wingate murmured.

She looked at him curiously.

"Has anything happened?" she asked.

"You seem distressed."

Wingate shook his head.

"Forgive me," he begged. "The fact of it is, the last person I expected to find here was Peter Phipps. I forgot that your husband was connected with his company."

"You two are not friends?"

"We are bitter enemies," Wingate confessed, "and shall be till one of us goes down. In more primitive days we should have gone for one another's throats. One would have lived and the other died."

Josephine shivered.

"Don't," she implored. "You sound too much in earnest."

"I am in earnest about that man," he replied gravely. "I beg you, Lady Dredlington, as I hope to call myself your friend, not to trust him."

"And I," she answered, holding out her hand, "as I hope and mean to be—as I am your friend—promise that I will have no more to do with him than the barest courtesy demands. To tell you the truth, your coming this afternoon was a little inopportune. If you had been a single minute later, I honestly believe that he would have said unforgivable things."

Wingate's eyes flashed.

"If I could have heard him!"

"But, dear friend, you could have said nothing or done anything," she reminded him soothingly. "Remember that, although we are a little older friends than many people know of, we still have some distance to go in understanding."

"I want to be your friend, and I want to be your friend quickly," he said doggedly.



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"No one in the world needs friends as I do," Josephine answered, "because I do not think that anyone is more lonely."

"And I, too," he declared, "I need your friendship. I have come over here with rather a desperate purpose. I think I can say that I have never known fear, and yet sometimes I flinch when I think of the next few months. I want a real friend, Lady Dredlinton."

She gave him her hand.

"Josephine, if you please," she said, "and all the friendship you care to claim. There—see how rapidly we have progressed!"

They began to talk of their first meeting, of the doctors and friends whom they had known together. The time slipped away. It was nearly seven o'clock when he rose to leave. She seemed loath to let him go.

"What are you doing this evening?" she inquired.

"Nothing," he answered promptly.

"Come back and dine here," she begged. "I warn you, no one is coming, but I think you had better meet Henry, and, to proceed to the more selfish part of it all, I rather dread a tête-à-tête dinner this evening. Will you be very good-natured and come?"

He held her hands and looked into her eyes.

"Josephine," he asked, "do you think it needs any good nature on my part?"

She met his gaze frankly enough at first, smiling gratefully at his ready acceptance. And then a curious change came. She felt her heart begin to beat faster, the strange intrusion of a new element into her life and thoughts and being. It was shining out of his eyes—something which made her a little afraid yet ridiculously light-hearted. Suddenly, she felt the color burning in her cheeks. She withdrew her hands, lost her presence of mind, and found it again at the sound of the servant's approaching footsteps.

"About eight o'clock, then," she said.

"A dinner coat will do unless you are going on anywhere. Henry will be so glad to meet you."

"It will give me great pleasure to meet Lord Dredlinton," Wingate murmured, as he made his farewell bow.

VIII

DREDLINTON HOUSE, before which Wingate presented himself punctually at eight o'clock that evening, had a somber, almost a deserted appearance. He followed the butler into a small anteroom, from which, however, he was rescued a few minutes later by Josephine's maid.

"Her ladyship will be glad if you will come to the boudoir," she invited. "Dinner is to be served there."

Wingate passed up the famous staircase, round which was a little semicircle of closed doors, and was ushered into a small apartment on the first floor, through the sun-blind-shielded windows of which was a glimpse of green trees. The room was like a little fairy chamber, decorated in white and the faintest shade of mauve. In the center, a white-and-gold round table was prepared for the service of dinner, some wonderful cut glass and a little bunch of mauve sweet peas its only decoration.

"Her ladyship will be down in a moment," the maid announced, as she lowered

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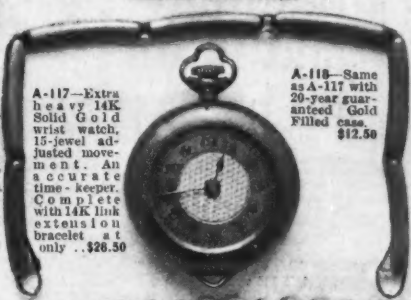
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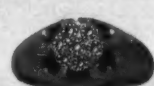
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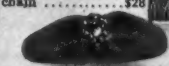
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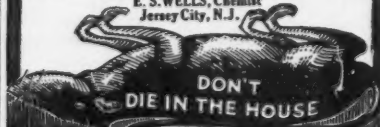
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the blind a little more to keep out the last gleam of sunlight. "If monsieur will be seated—"

Wingate ignored the silent invitation of the voluptuous little settee with its pile of cushions. He stood, instead, upon the hearth-rug, gazing round him. The room, in its way, was a revelation. Josephine, ever since their first meeting at Étapes, had always seemed to him to carry with her a faint suggestion of sadness, which everything in this little apartment seemed to contradict. The silver-point sketches on the wall were delicate but daring, exquisite in workmanship and design, the last word in the expression of modern life and love. A study of Psyche, in white marble, fascinated him with its wonderful outline and sense of arrested motion. The atmosphere appeared to him intensely feminine and yet strange. He realized suddenly that the room contained no knick-knacks—nothing but books and flowers. Perhaps his greatest surprise, however, came at the opening of the door. It seemed, at first, that he was confronted by a stranger. The woman who entered in a perfectly white gown of some clinging material, with a single row of pearls round her neck, with ringless fingers and plainly coiled hair, seemed like the ghost of her own girlhood. It was only when she smiled that he found himself able to read-just his tangled impressions. Then he realized that she was no longer a girl, that she was indeed a woman, beautiful, graceful, serious, with all the charm of her greater physical and spiritual maturity.

"Don't, please, think," she begged, as she sank into the settee by which he was standing, "that I have inveigled you here under false pretenses. Henry took the trouble to ring me up from the City this morning to say that he should be dining at home, such an unusual event that I took it for granted it meant a *tête-à-tête*. I don't quite know why I treat you with such an extraordinary amount of confidence," she went on, "but I feel that I must, and it helps me so much. A *tête-à-tête* dinner with my husband would have been insupportable."

"You don't imagine," he asked, smiling, "that I am disappointed at your husband's absence?"

"I hope not," she answered.

"Let me imitate your adorable frankness," he begged. "I hope your husband's absence this evening is not because he objects to meeting me."

"Of course not," she replied wonderingly. "Why on earth should he object to meeting you?"

"You probably don't know," Wingate replied, "that I am, in a sort of way, the declared enemy of the British & Imperial Granaries—Phipps' latest escapade—of which your husband is a director."

"I am sure that would not have made the slightest difference," she replied. "As a matter of fact, he had no idea that you were coming this evening—I had no opportunity of telling him. A servant rang up from the club, half an hour ago, to say that he would not be home. Come; here is dinner. Will you sit there?" she invited, indicating the chair which a trim parlor-maid was holding.

Wingate took his place, and the conversation merged into those indefinite channels necessitated by the presence of servants. The dinner, simple though it

was, was perfect—iced consommé, a lobster mayonnaise, cold cutlets, and asparagus. Presently, the little movable sideboard, with its dainty collection of cold dishes and salads, was wheeled outside by the solitary maid who waited upon them, and nothing was left upon the table but a delicately-shaped Venetian decanter of Château Yquem, liqueurs in tiny bottles, the coffee, served in a jug of beaten copper, and an ivory box of cigarettes. With the closing of the door, a different atmosphere seemed immediately created. They smiled into one another's eyes in mutual appreciation.

"I was dying to send Laura away," she confessed. "Why do servants get on one's nerves so when one wants to talk? I don't think I ever noticed it before so much."

"Nor I," he admitted. "Now that we are alone, there is a sort of luxury in thinking that one may open any one of those subjects I want so much to discuss with you, and perhaps a greater luxury still is the feeling that, unless one chooses, one need say nothing and yet be understood."

"Sympathetic person!" She sighed. "Tell me: Did you notice an air of desertion in the lower part of the house?"

"There seemed to be echoes," he admitted.

"The whole of the rooms down-stairs were fitted up as a small hospital during the last year of the war," she explained. "It was after I had a slight breakdown and was sent back from Etaples. Some of our patients stayed on for months afterward, and we have never had the place put to rights. One or two rooms are quite sufficient for us in these days."

"It seems to be a wing by itself that remains empty," Wingate ruminated.

She nodded.

"The house might have been built for the purpose we put it to," she said. "The rooms we turned into a hospital are quite cut off from the rest of the place. If ever you murder Peter Phipps and want a hiding-place, I shall be able to provide you with one."

He was looking unusually thoughtful. It was evident that he was pursuing some train of reflection suggested by her words. At the mention of Phipps' name, however, he came back to earth.

"I think I should rather like to murder Phipps," he confessed.

"Queer how I share your hatred of that person," she murmured.

"Was he trying to make love to you this afternoon?" Wingate asked bluntly.

"He was too clever," she replied, "to put it into plain words. His instinct told him what the result would have been; so he decided to wait a little longer, although, just toward the end, he nearly gave himself away. As a matter of fact," she went on, "he was rather tediously melodramatic. My husband, it seems, is in disgrace with the company—has overdrawn or helped himself to money or something of the sort. I am a very hard-hearted woman, I suppose, but I don't believe I should lift up my little finger to save Henry from prison. Besides, I hate the British & Imperial Granaries."

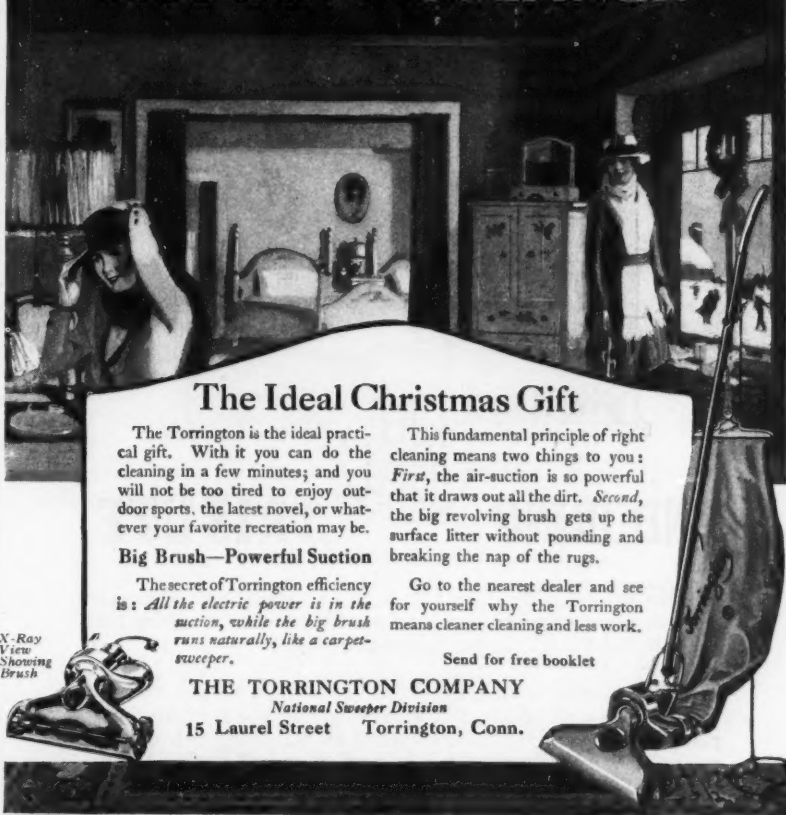
"Why?" he asked.

"I hate the principle of gambling in commodities that are necessary for the poor," she answered.

"Tell me," he asked, a little abruptly,

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"To the fullest extent of my power," she answered eagerly. "Tell me about it at once, please!"

"Not for a few days," he replied.

"Promise me that I shall help?" she insisted.

"I promise that you shall have the opportunity."

She rose from her chair and settled down in a corner of the settee. With a little half-unconscious gesture, she invited him to take the place by her side.

"Do you know," she said, "that you are making life much more endurable for me?"

"You should never believe it unendurable," he told her firmly. "Whatever one has suffered, and however dreary the present, there is always the future."

"I wonder," she murmured. "In this life or the next?"

"In this one," he answered.

"Perhaps we should try to believe like La Fontaine," she observed, "that sorrow and unhappiness are akin to disease, a mental instead of a physical scourge—that they must pass just as inevitably?"

"It is a comfortable philosophy," he confessed. "Could you adopt it?"

"In my blackest moments, I should have scoffed at the idea," she replied. "One thing, I know quite well, though, is unchanging," she continued, her face losing its gentle softness. "That is my hatred of everything and everybody connected with my present life."

"Everybody?" he murmured.

She stretched out her hand impulsively. He held it in his with a tender, caressing clasp. There seemed to be no need of words. The moment was, in its way, so wonderful that neither of them heard the opening of the door. It was only the surprised exclamation of the man who had entered which brought them back to a very sordid present.

IX

"I FEAR," the newcomer remarked, as he softly closed the door behind him, "that I am an intruder. Perhaps, Josephine, I may be favored with an introduction to this gentleman. He is a stranger to me, so far as I remember. An old friend of yours, I presume."

He advanced a step or two further into the room, a slim, effeminate-looking person of barely medium height, dressed with the utmost care, of apparently no more than middle age, but with crow's-feet about his eyes and sagging pockets of flesh underneath them. His closely trimmed sandy mustache was streaked with gray; his eyes were a little bloodshot; he had the shrinking manner of one who suffers from habitual nervousness. Josephine, after her first start of surprise, watched him with coldly questioning eyes.

"I hope you have dined, Henry," she said. "A waiter rang up from somewhere to say you would not be home."

"A message which I do not doubt left you inconsolable," he observed, with a little curl of his lips. "Do not distress yourself, I pray. I have dined at the club, and I have only come home to change."

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I am on my way to a party. I would not have intruded if your maid had shown her usual discretion."

Josephine ignored the insolent innuendo.

"You do not know my husband, I think, Mr. Wingate," she said. "Mr. John Wingate—Lord Dredlington."

The newcomer's manner underwent a sudden change.

"What? John Wingate, from New York!" he exclaimed.

Wingate assented briefly. Lord Dredlington advanced at once with outstretched hand.

"My dear sir," he said, "I am delighted to meet you. I have just been dining with our mutual friend, Peter Phipps, and your name was the last mentioned. I, in fact, accepted a commission to find you out and convey a message from Phipps. There is a little matter in which you are both indirectly interested which he wants to discuss."

Wingate had risen to his feet.

"To be quite frank with you, Lord Dredlington," he said, as he returned the newcomer's greeting without enthusiasm, "I cannot imagine any subject in which I could share an interest with Mr. Phipps."

Lord Dredlington was politely surprised.

"Is that so? Peter Phipps is an awfully good fellow."

"Mr. Phipps is a director of the British & Imperial Granaries, Limited."

"So am I," Lord Dredlington announced, with a bland smile.

"I am aware of it," was the curt reply.

"You don't approve of our company?"

"I do not."

Lord Dredlington shrugged his shoulders. He lighted a cigarette.

"Well, well," he continued amiably; "there is no need for us to quarrel, I hope. We all look at things differently in this world, and, fortunately, the matter which he wants to discuss with you lies right outside the operations of the B. & I. When can you give him a few moments of your time, Mr. Wingate? Will you call round at our offices, next Tuesday morning, at, say, eleven-thirty?"

Wingate was a little perplexed.

"I don't want to waste your time, Lord Dredlington," he said. "Can't you give me some idea of this business?"

"To tell you the truth, I can't," the other confided. "It's Phipps' affair. I'll promise, though, that we won't keep you for longer than ten minutes."

"I will come, then," Wingate acquiesced, a little doubtfully. "I must warn you, however, that between Phipps and myself there is a quarrel of ancient standing. And one of my objects in coming to this side is to consider whether I can find any reasonable means of attacking the very disgraceful trust with which you and he are associated."

Lord Dredlington remained entirely unruffled. He shrugged his shoulders.

"You are a little severe, Mr. Wingate," he said, "but I promise you that Phipps will keep his temper. I am very pleased to see you here. My wife's friends are always mine. If you will excuse me, I will go and change my clothes now. I have been inveigled into a theatrical supper-party."

He turned away, with an enigmatic smile at his wife and a ceremonious bow to Wingate. He closed the door behind him carefully. Wingate resumed his seat by Josephine's side.

"Do you mind?" he asked.
 "Not a scrap," she replied. "Besides, it has given Henry such immense pleasure. I am quite sure that he never believed it possible that I should be found holding another man's hand. Or," she went on, with a little grimace, "that any other man would want to hold it."

"It is possible," Wingate said deliberately, "that your husband may have further surprises in store for him of that nature."

"Is that a threat?" She laughed.

"If you like to regard it as such. You will find out before long that I am a terribly persistent person."

"I wonder," she remarked, "what made him so agreeable to you?"

"To tell you the truth, I was surprised," Wingate replied. "And Peter Phipps, too. What can they want with me down in Throgmorton Street? They can't imagine that they can hustle me into the market. They couldn't suspect—no; that wouldn't be possible!"

"Suspect what?"

"That my enmity to the B. & I.," he went on, in a low tone, "is beginning to take definite shape."

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"I have just the glimmerings of a scheme," he told her.

"Don't forget that you have promised to let me help," she reminded him.

"If I strike," he said, "it will be at the directors. Your husband will suffer with the rest."

"That would not affect my attitude in the least," she assured him. "There is no manner of sympathy between my husband and myself."

"I am glad to hear you say so," he declared bluntly. "If there had been, I should have felt it my duty to advise you to use all your influence to get him to resign from the board."

"As bad as that?"

"As bad as that," he answered.

"You can't tell me anything about your scheme yet?"

"Not yet."

"How is it," she asked, "that they have been allowed to operate in wheat to this enormous extent?"

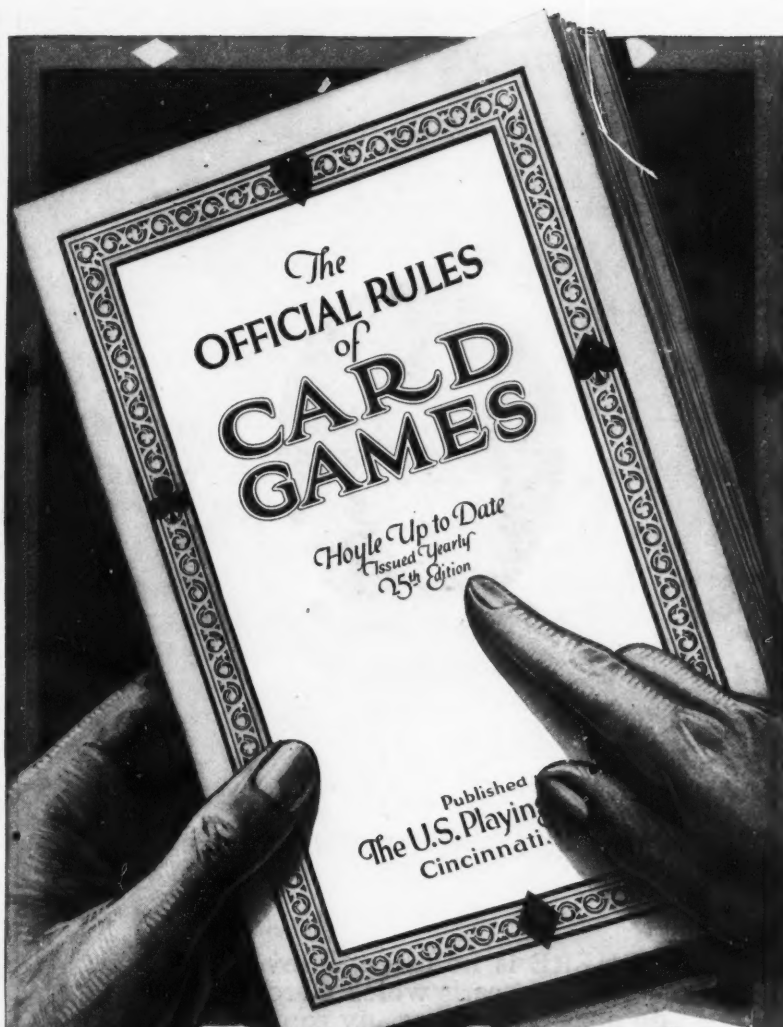
"Well, for one thing," he told her, "the company has been planned and worked out with simply diabolical cleverness. They are inside the law all the time, and they manage to keep there. Their agents are so camouflaged that you can't tell for whom they are buying. Then, they command an immense capital."

"The others must have found it, then," she observed. "My husband is almost without means."

"Phipps has supporters," Wingate said thoughtfully. "They'll carry on this combine until the last moment, until a government commission or something of the sort looks like intervening. Then they'll probably let a dozen of their subsidiary companies go smash, and Peter Phipps, Skinfint Martin, and Rees will be multimillionaires. Incidentally, the whole of their enormous profits will have come from the working classes."

"However visionary it is, I want to know about your scheme," she persisted. "Could I help? You know in your heart that you could not make me afraid."

"I shall take you into my confidence, at any rate," he promised, "and you shall



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decide afterward. I warn you—you will think that I have drunk deep of the Bowery melodrama."

She laughed.

"I shall mind nothing," she assured him. "When do we begin?"

He was thoughtful for a moment or two. They both heard the opening of a heavy door down below, the hailing of a taxi by the butler, and Dredlington's voice.

"Is that your husband going?" he inquired.

She nodded.

"Then I am going to make a most singular request," he said. "I am going to ask you whether you would show me over the portion of the house which you used as a hospital."

X

WINGATE returned to his rooms at the Milan about eleven o'clock that evening, to find Roger Kendrick, Maurice White, and the Honourable Jimmy Wilshaw stretched out in his most comfortable chairs, drinking whiskies and sodas and smoking cigarettes.

"Welcome!" he exclaimed, smiling upon them from the threshold. "Are you all here? Is there anyone I forgot to invite?"

"The man's tone is inhospitable," the Honourable Jimmy murmured, showing no inclination to rise.

"I decline to apologize," Kendrick said. "The fact of it is, we're here for your good, Wingate. We are here to see that you do not die of ennui and loneliness in this stony-hearted city."

"In other words," Maurice White chimed in, "we are here to take you to a great supper-party."

"Well, I'm glad to hear about it," Wingate declared, giving his coat and hat to the valet who had followed him in. "Why don't you fellows sit down and have a drink?"

"My dear fellow," Kendrick sighed, "sarcasm does not become you. We are all drinking—your whisky. Also, I believe, smoking your cigarettes. Your servant—admirable fellow, that—absolutely forced them upon us—wouldn't take 'no.' And, indeed, why should we refuse? We have come to offer you rivers of champagne, cigars of abnormal length, and the lips of the fairest hours in London. In other words, Sir Frederick Houstley, steel magnate of Sheffield, is giving a supper-party to the world, and our instructions are to convey you there by force or persuasion, drunk or sober."

"I accept your cordial invitation," Wingate said, mixing himself a whisky and soda. "At what time does the fight begin?"

"Forthwith," Kendrick announced. "We sally forth from here to the Arcadian Rooms, situated in this building. Afterward, we make merry. John, my boy," he went on, "you have the air of a man who has drunk deep already to-night of the waters of happiness. Exactly where did you dine?"

"In Utopia," Wingate answered. "According to you, I am to sup in fairy-land."

"But breakfast," the Honourable Jimmy put in. "A man ought to be dashed careful where he breakfasts. A man is known by his breakfast companions—what?"

"Young fellow," Wingate asked, "where is Sarah?"

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"Have no fear," was the blissful reply. "Sarah is coming to the supper. She's filling her old 'bus up with peaches from the Gaiety. Not being allowed to sit inside with any of them, I was sent on ahead."

"You dog!" Maurice White exclaimed.

"Dog yourself!" was the prompt retort. "Opportunity is a fine thing. Sometimes I have a gruesome fear that Sarah does not altogether trust me."

Kendrick, who had been straightening his tie before the glass, now swung round.

"This way to the lift, boys," he said. "Time we put in an appearance."

The reception-room of the Arcadian suite was already fairly well crowded. Wingate shook hands with his host, a cheery, theatrical-loving soul, and was presented to many other people. Where he was not introduced, he found a pleasing absence of formality, which facilitated conversation and rapidly widened his circle of acquaintances. Kendrick came over and slapped him on the back.

"Wingate, my lad," he exclaimed, "you're going some! You're the bright boy of the party. Whom are you taking in to supper?"

"Me!" said a rather shrill but not unmusical voice from Wingate's side. "Introduce us, please, Mr. Kendrick. We have been making furtive conversation for the last five minutes."

"It is a great occasion," Kendrick declared. "I present Mr. John Wingate, America's greatest financier, most successful soldier, and absolutely inevitable president, to Miss Flossie Lane, England's greatest musical-comedy artist."

Miss Lane grabbed Wingate's arm.

"Let's go in to supper," she suggested. "All the best places will be taken if we don't hurry."

"One word," Kendrick begged. "Dredlinton is here, rather drunk and very quarrelsome. I heard him telling some one about having found you dining alone with his wife to-night. Phipps was listening. Keep your head if Dredlinton gets troublesome."

Wingate nodded, and was promptly led away. They found places about half-way down the great horseshoe table, laden with flowers and every sort of cold delicacy. There were champagne bottles at every other place, a small crowd of waiters, eager to justify their existence—a rollicking, bohemian crowd, the *jeunesse dorée* of London, and all the talent and beauty of the musical-comedy stage. It was a side of life with which Wingate was somewhat unfamiliar. Nevertheless, his feet, that night, were resting upon the clouds. Any form of life was sweet to him. The new joy in his heart warmed his pulses. He was disposed to talk with everybody. The young lady by his side, however, had other views.

"Do you like our show, Mr. Wingate?" she asked. "Or perhaps you don't go to musical comedies. I am in 'Lady Diana,' you know."

"One of the very first things I am going to see," Wingate replied. "I only arrived from America a few days ago. I hear that you are a great success."

"I am not vain," the young lady replied, with engaging frankness, "but, on the other hand, I am not foolish, and I know quite well that many people—a great part of the audience, in fact—come because they see my name upon the



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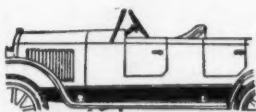
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Cosmopolitan for December, 1920

boards, and I have numberless complaints because I am only on for such a short time in what should be the most important act of the play. I tell them it's nothing to do with me, but as long as my name is displayed outside the theater and I know how they feel about it, I feel a certain responsibility. What do you think about it?"

"I think that you are quite right," he declared, with satisfactory emphasis.

"You don't know Mr. Maken, our manager, I suppose?" she inquired.

Wingate shook his head.

"As a matter of fact," he confessed, "I know very few theatrical people."

"What a pity you're not fond of the stage!" she sighed. "You might have a theater of your own, and a leading lady, and all the rest of it."

"It sounds rather fascinating," he admitted, "under certain circumstances. All the same, I don't think I should like to make a business of what is such a great pleasure."

"I thought, with American men," she said archly, "that their business was their pleasure."

"To a certain extent, I suppose," he admitted, "but, then, you see, I am half English. My mother was English."

"How did you manage about serving?" she inquired.

"I gave both a turn," he explained. "I turned out for England first, and then for America."

"How splendid of you!" she murmured raising her fine eyes admiringly and then dropping them in a most effective manner. "But wasn't it a shocking waste of time and lives? Do you think they will be able to stop wars in the future?"

"I don't know," he confessed. "I suppose international differences must be settled somehow or another. Personally, I think a wrestling-match, or something of that sort—"

"Now you're making fun of me," she interrupted reproachfully. "I see you don't want to talk about serious things. Do you admire Miss Orford?" she asked, indicating another musical-comedy lady who was seated opposite.

Wingate took his cue from his questioner's tone.

"A little too thin," he hazarded.

"Molly is almost painfully thin," his companion conceded, with apparent reluctance, "and I think she makes up far more than she needs."

"Bad for the complexion in time, I suppose," he observed.

"I don't know. Molly's been doing it for a great many years. She understudies me, you know, at the theater. Would you like me to send you word if ever I'm unable to play?"

"Quite unnecessary," he replied, with the proper amount of warmth. "I should be far too broken-hearted to attend if you were not there. Besides, is Miss Orford clever?"

"Don't ask me," her friend sighed. "She doesn't even do me the compliment of imitating me. Tell me: Don't you love supping here?"

"Under present circumstances," he agreed.

"I love it, too," she murmured, with an answering flash of the eyes. "I am not sure," she went on, "that I care about these large parties, although I always like

to come when Sir Frederick asks me. I am so fond of really interesting conversation, I love to have a man who really amounts to something tell me about his life and work."

"Mr. Peter Phipps, for instance?" he suggested. "Didn't I see you lunching here with him the other day?"

She looked across the table, toward where Phipps was sitting hand in hand with a young lady in blue, and apparently being very entertaining. Miss Flossie caught a glimpse of Wingate's expression.

"You don't think I ought to lunch with Mr. Phipps?" she asked.

"I shouldn't if I were a young lady like you, whose choice must be unlimited," Wingate replied.

"How do you know that it is unlimited?" she demanded. "Perhaps just the people whom I would like to lunch with don't ask me."

"They need encouragement," he suggested.

She laughed into his eyes.

"Do you know anything about the men who need encouragement?" she asked demurely.

He avoided the point, and made some casual remark about the changes in London during the last few years. She sighed sorrowfully.

"It has changed for no one so much as me," she murmured. "The war—"

"You lost friends, I suppose?"

She closed her eyes.

"Don't!" she whispered. "I never speak of it," she went on, twisting a ring round her fingers nervously. "I don't like it mentioned, but I was really engaged to young Lord Fanleighton."

He murmured a little word of sympathy, and their conversation was momentarily interrupted as she leaned forward to answer an inquiry from her host. Wingate turned to Sarah, who was seated at his other side.

"How dare you neglect me so shamefully?" she asked.

"Let me make amends," he pleaded.

"I am glad you feel penitent, at any rate. I expect Miss Flossie Lane has asked you what you think of her friend, Miss Orford, and told you that she was engaged to Lord Fanleighton."

"What a hearing!" he murmured.

"Don't be silly," she replied. "I couldn't hear a word, but I know her stock in trade."

There was a little stir at the further end of the table. Lord Dredlington had left his place and was standing behind Phipps, with his hands upon his shoulders. He seemed to be shouting something in his ear. At that moment, he recognized Wingate. He staggered up the further side of the table toward him, butting into a waiter on the way, and pausing, for a moment, to curse him. Flossie jogged Wingate's elbow.

"What fun!" she whispered. "Here's Lord Dredlington, absolutely blotto!"

XI

WINGATE, from the first, had a pre-science of disagreeable things. There was malice in Dredlington's pallid face. He paused opposite them, and, leaning his hands on the back of the nearest chair, spoke across the table.

"Hullo, Flossie!" he exclaimed. "How are you, old dear? How are you, Wingate?"



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Wingate replied with cold civility, Flossie with a careless nod.

"I say," Dredlington went on, "what are you doing here, Wingate? I didn't know this sort of thing was in your line."

Wingate raised his eyebrows but made no response. Dredlington shook his head reproachfully at Miss Lane.

"Flossie," he continued, "you ought to know better. Besides, you will waste your time. Mr. Wingate's taste in women is of a very—superior order. Doesn't care about your sort at all. He likes saints. That's right, isn't it, Wingate?"

"You seem to know," was the cool reply.

"Not 't tall sure." Dredlington went on, balancing himself with difficulty, "that your new conquest would altogether approve of this, you know, Wingate. Let me tell you that Flossie is a very dangerous young lady—not your sort at all, Wingate. We know your sort, don't we, eh?"

Wingate remained contemptuously silent. Kendrick rose from his place and laid his hand on Dredlington's shoulder.

"Come and sit down, Dredlington," he said shortly.

"Go to blazes!" the other replied truculently. "Who are you? Just that man's broker; that's all. Want to sell wheat, Wingate, or buy it, eh?"

Wingate looked at him steadily.

"You're drunk," he said. "I should advise you to get a friend to take you home."

"Drunk, am I?" Dredlington shouted. "What if I am? I'm a better man drunk than you are sober—although she may not think so, eh?"

Wingate looked at him from underneath level brows.

"I should advise you not to mention any names here," he said.

"I like that!" the other scoffed. "Not to mention any names, eh? He'll forbid me, next, to talk about my own wife."

"You'd be a cur if you did," Wingate told him.

A little spot of color burned in Dredlington's cheeks. For a moment, he showed his teeth. But for Kendrick's restraining arm, he seemed as though he would have thrown himself across the table. Then, with a great effort, he regained command of himself.

"So you won't sell wheat and you won't buy wheat, Mr. American!" he jeered. "I know what you would like to buy, though—and there's old Drednought Phipps, down there—he's a bidder, too—ain't you, Phipps, old boy? What you see in her, either of you, I don't know. She's no use to me."

Phipps stood up in his place. Sir Frederick Houstley left his chair and came round to Dredlington.

"Lord Dredlington," he said, "I think you had better leave."

"I'll leave when I damn well please!" was the quick reply. "Don't you lose your wool, old Freddy. This is going to be a joke. You listen. I tell you what I'll do: I'm a poor man—devilish poor—and it takes a lot of money to enjoy oneself nowadays. You're all in this. Sit tight and listen. We'll have an auction."

Wingate rose slowly to his feet, pushed his chair back, and stood behind it. Flossie gripped him by the wrist.

"Don't take any notice of him, please, Mr. Wingate," she implored, in an agonized whisper. "For my sake, don't!"

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"Look here, Dredlinton," Sir Frederick expostulated: "You are spoiling my party. You don't want to quarrel with me, do you?"

"Quarrel with you, Freddy?" Dredlinton replied, patting him on the back affectionately. "Not I! I'm too fond of you, old dear. You give too nice parties. Always the right sort of people—except for that bouncer over there," he went on, nodding his head toward Wingate.

"Then sit down and don't make an ass of yourself," his host begged. "You're spoiling everyone's enjoyment, making a disturbance like this."

"Spoiling their enjoyment be hanged!" Dredlinton scoffed. "Tell you what—I'm going to make the party go. I'm going to have a bit of fun. What about an auction, eh? An auction with two bidders only—both millionaires—one's a pal and the other isn't. Both want the same thing—happens to be mine. I never thought it was worth anything, but here goes! What'll you bid, Phipps?"

Phipps appraised the situation and decided upon his role. He had a very correct intuition as to what was likely to happen.

"Sit down and don't be an ass, Dredlinton," he laughed. "Don't take the fellow seriously," he went on, speaking generally. "He's all right as long as you let him alone. You're all right; aren't you, Dredlinton?"

"Right as rain," was the confident reply. "But let's hear your bid."

"Bid!" You've got nothing to sell," Phipps declared good-humoredly. "What are you getting rid of, eh? Your household goods?"

"Come on, Phipps," Dredlinton persisted; "you're not going to fade away like that. You've given me the straight tip. You were the only man in the running. Clear course. No jealousy. Up to you to step in and win. You've got a rival, I tell you. You'll have to bid, or lose her. Open your mouth wide, man! Start it with ten thou?"

"Sit down, you blithering jackass!" Phipps roared. "Give him a drink, some one, and keep him quiet."

"Don't want a drink," Dredlinton replied, shaking himself free from Kendrick's grasp. "Want to keep my head clear. Big deal, this! May reestablish the fortunes of a fallen family. Gad, it's a night for all you outsiders to remember, this!" he went on, glancing insolently round the table. "Don't often have the chance of seeing a nobleman selling his household treasures. Come on, Wingate; Phipps is shy about starting. Let's have your bid. What about ten thou, eh?"

Wingate came slowly round the table. Dredlinton watched him drawing nearer and nearer.

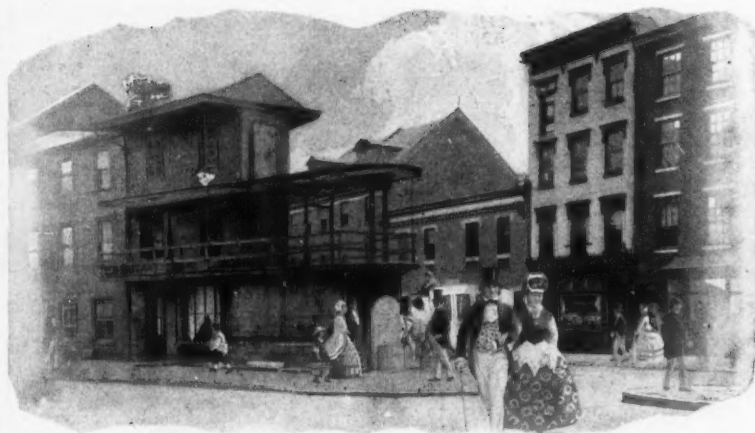
"What! Do you want to whisper your bid?" he jeered. "Out with it like a man! This is a unique opportunity. Heaven knows when you may get the chance again. Shall we say twenty thou, Wingate?"

"What on earth is he trying to sell?" Flossie demanded.

Dredlinton turned with an evil grin. He took no account of Wingate towering over him.

"Don't you know?" he cried out. "Doesn't everyone understand?"

"Stop!" Wingate ordered.



Where Lafayette Talked to Philadelphia

FROM the balcony of this old Post House in Philadelphia, where the stages to New York stopped for passengers, General Lafayette addressed the citizens during his triumphal visit to the United States after the Revolution. Just beyond the extreme right of the picture stands a flag-pole marking the spot where the Delaware Indians held their last Council before leaving the city at the request of William Penn. The Philadelphia branch of Berry Brothers, Incorporated, occupies the building just opposite.



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"And why should I stop for you?" Dredlington shouted. "If Flossie wants to know, here's the truth. It's the least cherished of all my household goods. It's my wife!"

Of what happened during the next few seconds, or rather of the manner of its happenings, few people were able to render a coherent account. All that they remembered was a most amazing spectacle—the spectacle of Wingate walking quietly to the door with Dredlington in his arms, kicking and shouting smothered profanities, but absolutely powerless to free himself. The door was opened by a waiter, and Wingate passed into the corridor. A *maitre d'hôtel* with presence of mind hurried up to him.

"Have you an empty room with a key?" Wingate asked.

The man led the way, pushed open the door of a small apartment used on busy occasions for a service-room. Wingate thrust in his struggling burden and locked the door.

"Strong panels?" he inquired, pausing for a moment to listen to the blows directed upon them.

The head waiter smiled.

"They're more than one man can break through sir," he assured him.

Wingate made his way back to the supper-party. He met Sir Frederick near the door.

"Sorry, Sir Frederick, if I am in any way responsible for this little disturbance," he said, as he made his way toward his place. "I think, if I were you, I should give this key to one of the commissionaires a little later on. Lord Dredlington is quite safe for the present."

Sir Frederick patted him on the shoulder. "Most unprovoked attack," he declared. "Delighted to have made your acquaintance, Mr. Wingate. You treated him exactly as he deserved."

Wingate resumed his place and held out his glass to the waiter. Then he raised it to his lips. The glass was full to the brim, but his fingers were perfectly steady. He looked down the table toward Phipps, whose expression was non-committal, and gently disburdened himself of Flossie's arm, which had stolen through his.

"I think you are the most wonderful man I ever met," she confided.

"You're a brick!" Sarah whispered in his ear. "Come and see me off the premises—there's a dear! Jimmy won't be ready for hours yet, and I want to get home."

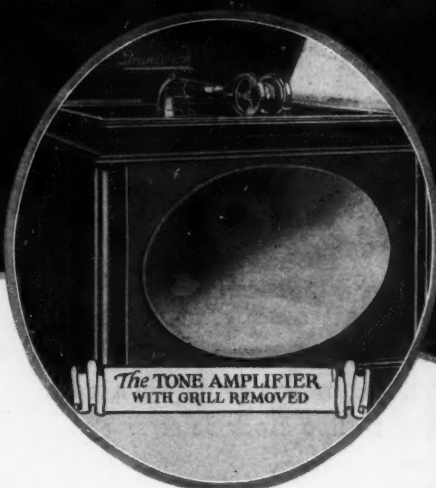
Wingate rose at once, made his adieus, and accompanied Sarah to the door, followed by a reproachful glance from Flossie. The former took his arm and held it tightly as they passed along the corridor.

"I think that you are the dearest man I ever knew, Mr. Wingate," she said, "just as I think that Josephine is the dearest woman, and I hope more than anything in the world—well, you know what I hope."

"I think I do," Wingate replied. "Thank you."

No living author tells a story in better and more lively fashion than does Mr. Oppenheim. In *The Profiteers*, he has written a great romance of love and the world of daring affairs. The reader of the above chapters will not need to be told that some big and mighty interesting situations develop in the next instalment, which appears in *January Cosmopolitan*. Do not fail to read it.

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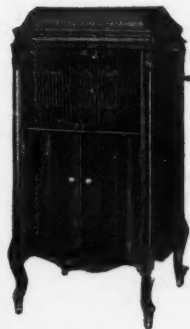


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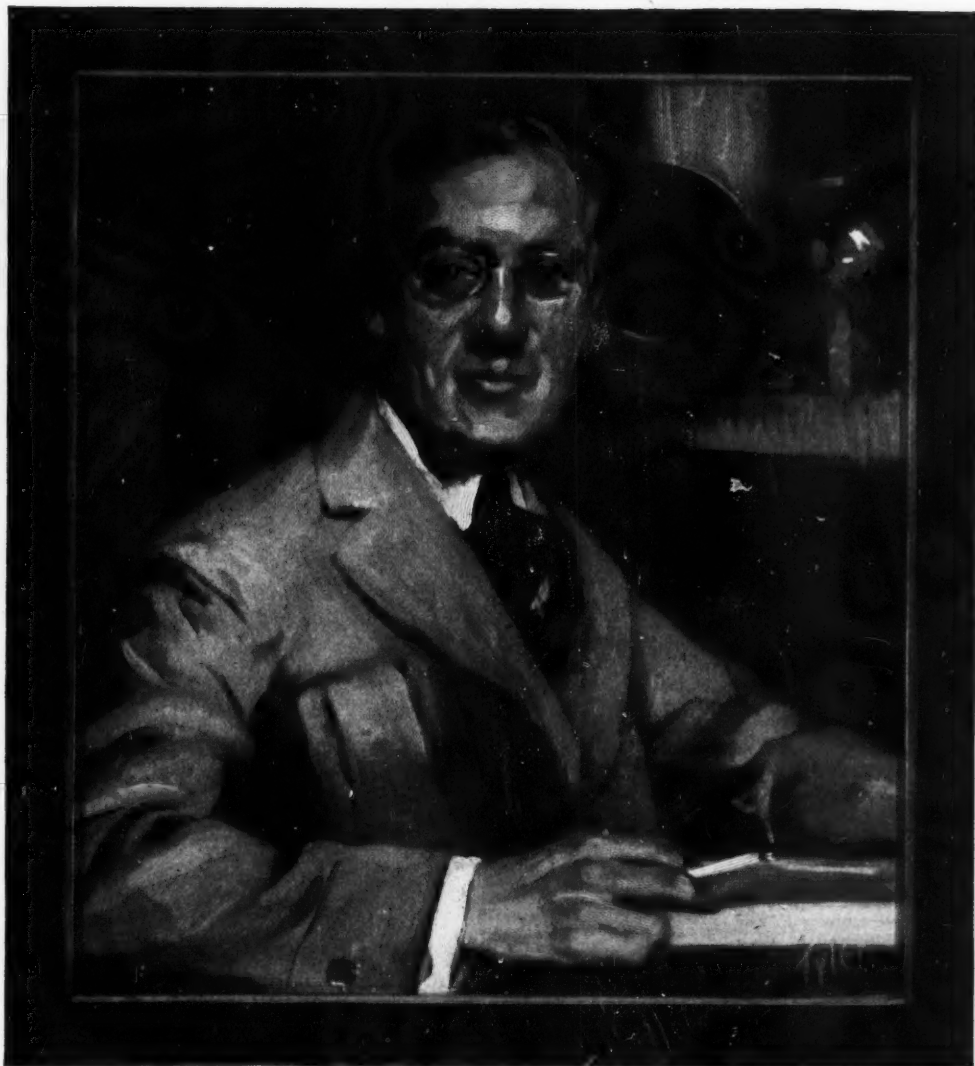
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